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INTRODUCTION.

GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING was born on the 22nd January 1729 at Kamenz, in Upper Lusatia, of which town his father, Johann Gottfried, was then Lutheran pastor, while his grandfather was Burgomaster of the same place. He came of a family distinguished for erudition during several generations, one of his ancestors having been Clemens Lessing of Chemnitz, who, in 1580, was among the signatories of the *Formula Concordiæ*, the famous declaration of Lutheran faith which superseded the *Augsburg Confession* of 1530, while his father was the author, among other works, of the *Vindiciæ Reformationis Lutheri*, a defence of the principles of the Reformation.

In his early youth, and when he had become the eldest surviving son of his father, Gotthold was by the latter dedicated to the ministry, in accordance with a custom which was traditional in his family. After a few years spent at the grammar school of his native place, he was, at the age of twelve, sent to the Fürstenschule at Meissen, where he soon outstripped

his contemporaries; and before quitting that establishment he had not only read many of the ancient classic authors, but had produced imitations of portions of Plautus, Terence, and Anacreon in German verse, had translated large sections of Euclid, had collected materials for a history of mathematics, and had even drafted the outline of one of his earlier plays. Completing the curriculum of study at the Fürstenschule in a year less than the customary time, he finally delivered there a valedictory oration under the title of *Mathematica Barbarorum*, which was considered remarkable for a youth of his age.

In the latter part of 1746 he was removed to the University of Leipzig, and was there entered as a student of theology. But now, freed from parental control, and seduced by the distractions of the larger world around him, the natural bent of his character shortly asserted itself. Discarding his theological studies, and deserting the lecture-rooms of the eminent theologians who then graced the university, he gave himself up to that study which has been called the proper study of mankind—the study of man himself as seen in the social circle and the busy forum; and it may perhaps be admitted that by this course, if he lost the benefits of a dogmatical training, he gained a practical knowledge of men and manners which he would probably not have acquired in the Divinity halls, and greatly developed the robust independence of character which marked his after career.

But his father, already sorely mortified by this defection of his son from the sacred calling for which he had been designed, had to endure a deeper disappointment still, for about this time Lessing manifested a love for the stage, for the society of theatrical companions, and for the composition of dramatic literature. At this period he made the acquaintance of Christlob Mylius, an accomplished but somewhat Bohemian character, who conducted successively two ephemeral periodicals to which our author contributed sundry fugitive lyrical pieces and epigrammatic compositions, as well as a comedy under the name of *Damon*. Along with Mylius, however, he attended the philosophic lectures of Kaestner and other celebrated teachers; and he resumed the study of mathematics, in view to the prosecution of certain inquiries in physical science which he seems at that time to have been engaged in, but in which he did not long persevere. In 1748 he produced his comedy *The Young Scholar*, which was presented on the Leipzig stage, and led to his becoming intimate with Weisse the dramatist and with the actor Koch. But notwithstanding the desultory nature of his activities at Leipzig, he found time for assiduous study in various branches of learning, and here, as throughout his life, he evinced an ardent thirst for knowledge, and a sincere desire for the ascertainment of truth.

After a brief visit to his parents, to whom he was now partly reconciled, and after a short

residence at Wittenberg, where he began the study of medicine, he went to Berlin, in the spring of 1749, with the determination of adopting literature as a profession, notwithstanding the fact that at that time it was held in little estimation as a career. In Berlin he at first studied Spanish, dabbled in dramatic writing, retouched some of his plays, commenced an essay on ancient pantomime, and, in collaboration with Mylius, edited the *Beiträge zur Historie und Aufnahme des Theaters*. In 1751 he formed a connection with the *Vossische Zeitung*, to which journal he contributed a series of learned critical articles; and in that year also he published a volume of minor poems under the title of *Kleinigkeiten*. His next literary undertaking was a collected edition, in six parts, of all that he had written up to that time, which was published at Berlin between the years 1753-55. At the Prussian capital, too, about this time, he made the acquaintance of Moses Mendelssohn and of Nicolai, in association with the former of whom he produced a remarkable critical essay on the ethical and metaphysical characteristics of Pope. He now also wrote a tragedy bearing the English title of *Miss Sara Sampson*, which was conspicuous for its rejection of French traditions, and the adoption in their stead of English modes of thought, and the illustration of ordinary middle-class life.

In 1756 he accompanied a young countryman of his own on a tour of travel, which, however, was brought to an early termination by the outbreak

of the Seven Years' War, when he returned to Berlin, and there formed the acquaintance and enjoyed the society of the poet Ewald von Kleist. In 1758 he co-operated with Nicolai and Mendelssohn in the production of an entirely new critical journal with the title of *Litteraturbriefe*, in which he displayed a lofty independence of thought, combined with a pronounced revolt against the hitherto predominant influence of French models, and an assertion of the superiority of our English Shakespeare to Corneille and all other dramatists of the French school. In 1759 he published his *Fables*, his *Essay on Fables*, and his tragedy *Philotas*. In 1760 appeared his *Life of Sophocles*, and his translation of Diderot's *Theatre*; and at the end of this year he obtained the post of secretary to General Tauenzien, the Governor of Breslau, in which position he greatly enlarged his knowledge of men and of the world. During his tenure of this office he read Spinoza and the Fathers, and also wrote the first part of his *Laokoon*, which, however, was not published till 1766.

In the following year he completed his sparkling and powerful comedy *Minna von Barnhelm*, which strikingly illustrates his complete emancipation from the influence of Gallic models, and also breathes a fine spirit of German patriotism. This latter play, however, was not given to the public till four years later. In 1767 he accepted a proposal that he should go to Hamburg to conduct the concerns of an association which had been

organised in that city for the improvement of the drama. In this position, besides various minor literary works, he produced the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, in which he completed the overthrow of French influence over the German drama, and gave to the world an expression of his original and independent views on this subject. In a financial point of view, however, his labours at Hamburg were not successful, and he was in fact at this time reduced to serious pecuniary straits.

At this juncture, fortunately for him, the Duke of Brunswick offered him, in 1769, the post of librarian of the ducal library at Wolfenbüttel, and although the salary of the office was no more than £90, it at least served to save him from positive penury. Here he finally settled down, and continued to devote himself to varied literary activities. In 1772 he finished his admired tragedy *Emilia Galotti*, and this was followed in due course by no less than six volumes of contributions to history and literature culled from the treasures of the ducal library. In 1776 he visited Italy for the first time, and spent eight months there as companion to the Duke of Brunswick; and in October of the same year he married Eva König, the widow of a merchant of Hamburg, with whom he appears to have enjoyed the greatest domestic happiness; but this was unfortunately too soon terminated by her death in the beginning of 1778.

Lessing's last years, which were sufficiently afflicted by grief for the loss of his wife, by bad

health, and by pecuniary embarrassments, were still further embittered by a prolonged and rancorous theological controversy, the most notable outcome of which was his famous play *Nathan the Wise*, of which a translation follows in the present volume. Shortly before this time there had fallen into his hands, in manuscript form, a remarkable series of rationalistic strictures on dogmatic theology, which had been left unpublished by Hermann Samuel Reimarus, Professor of Hebrew and Mathematics at the Gymnasium of Hamburg. In 1777 Lessing commenced the issue of portions of this manuscript under the title of *The Wolfenbüttel Fragments, By an Unknown Author*. These, which were universally regarded as being from his own pen, drew down upon his head the indignation of a numerous body of orthodox theologians, and a fierce controversy ensued, and raged for some time with extreme acrimony. The most truculent of his adversaries was one Johann Melchior Götze, a Lutheran pastor of Hamburg, to whom, in 1779, he made a crushing reply in his *Anti-Götze*. This was quickly followed by his *Nathan the Wise*, and, in the succeeding year, by his *Education of the Human Race*; and although his scathing wit and robust logical methods secured for him a complete triumph over his rancorous opponents, it was not achieved without much disturbance of his tranquillity and serious injury to his health. His last work, and by no means the least of his contributions to literature, was a series of five dialogues on

free-masonry, under the title of *Ernst und Falk*, which appeared in 1778-80.

But now the active, restless spirit was nearing its earthly goal. After struggling with a long and trying illness, embittered to the last by the venom of his theological assailants, he suddenly succumbed, and died at Brunswick on the 15th February 1781, at the age of fifty-two. A statue was erected to his memory at Brunswick, the work of the famous sculptor Rietsche, as well as another at Berlin, forming one of the figures in a group comprising Goethe and Schiller. There is also a monument to him in the vestibule of the library at Wolfenbüttel.

Although *Nathan the Wise* did not make its appearance until the year 1779, it is known that the general outline of the piece had formed itself in the mind of the author some years before, and that so early as in 1776 he had discussed the subject with his Brunswick friends Schmid and Eschenburg. Various circumstances, however, and notably the preparations for his marriage, caused him to postpone the production of the work; and it was not till after the death of his wife, and when he was stung into indignation by the increasing virulence of the Wolfenbüttel controversy, that it seems to have occurred to him that from this material he might forge a formidable weapon to wield against his assailants.

This fine drama has been fitly characterised as "one of the noblest pleas for toleration ever penned,"

ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY.

As the plot of this drama is somewhat intricate, a brief analysis of it is here presented.

The central figure is, of course, Nathan the high-minded Jew, wise, good, generous, and charitable in the grandest sense. At the very moment when his wife and his seven sons have been burned to death by the Christians in a brutal massacre of all the Jews in Gath, a Christian infant is placed under his protection by an unknown hand, and becomes the object of his tender love and care. All his sentiments and all his acts are characterised by wisdom and generosity; and in an interview with Saladin he moves the wonder and admiration of that chivalrous and liberal-minded Saracen by the famous apologue of the three rings, breathing the finest spirit of toleration and charity.

Saladin is a truly lovable impersonation—brave, though occasionally severe to his enemies, unselfish and generous to a fault, with a noble scorn of wealth, and a mind singularly free from prejudice. It is in much the same light that he is represented by Scott in the *Talisman*. His sister Sittah is not an important figure in the action, but she exhibits a full share of the qualities of her generous brother, more especially in the second scene of the second act, where it is discovered that she has long secretly surrendered all her personal resources in order to swell the ebbing treasures of her brother.

Recha is the Christian waif who, in infancy, has been deposited in the hands of Nathan. She is ignorant of the fact that she is a Christian, and knows no father but the Jew, whom she loves with the deepest affection and respect. Her startling identity is not revealed until the closing scene of the drama.

Daya is a humble Christian woman, illiterate and inquisi-

tive, garrulous, and somewhat greedy of gifts. She is the widow of one of the followers of the third crusade, after whose death she has found a kindly home in the house of Nathan, where she acts as nurse to Recha in her infancy, and becomes a sort of companion to her in her maturity, and to whom she is devotedly attached. She has become possessed of the secret that Recha is by birth a Christian, and her conscience is continually reproaching her—as in the opening scene—for concealing this secret, and for looking on passively at the rearing of a Christian child in the Jewish faith, or in no faith at all. She is constantly urging Nathan to divulge to his ward that she is of Christian parentage, and to consign her to Christian care; but her conscientious scruples are generally successfully hushed by the lavish gifts of the generous Jew. As the action progresses she sees in the Templar an instrument chosen by God for effecting this cherished purpose; she does all in her power to promote a marriage between Recha and the knight, regardless of the fact that the rules of his Order prescribe celibacy; she tells him the secret of her being a Christian; and finally communicates the same fact to Recha herself.

The Templar is a young Crusader who, in a skirmish with the Saracens, has been taken prisoner, along with nineteen of his comrades, all of whom, as well as himself, with that severity which characterises Saladin in his dealings with captives of that Order so obnoxious to him, are condemned to death. Already he knelt upon his mantle with neck bared to receive the fatal stroke, when Saladin, who is present, is suddenly attracted by his features. He perceives in them, or fancies he perceives, a strange resemblance to those of a dearly loved brother of his own, named Assad, who, years before, was supposed to have fallen in an encounter with the Crusaders, and has never again been heard of. Moved by this resemblance, though with no definite ideas on the subject, Saladin spares the life of the Templar, who is suffered to live on parole at Jerusalem. While there, and during the absence of Nathan on a distant trading expedition, the house of the latter accidentally takes fire, and the

Templar saves the life of Recha in a moody fit of indifferent desperation. He scorns all thanks, refuses to visit the maiden in order to receive the expression of her gratitude, and finally, to escape from importunity on this account, he leaves the neighbourhood. Nathan, on his return—and this forms part of the opening scene of the drama—hears of the accident, and of the rescue of the maid; seeks out the Templar, assures him of his gratitude, proffers him his friendship, and proposes that he should become acquainted with the girl whose life he had saved. The haughty struggles of the young knight to escape what seems to him an unworthy intimacy, and his ultimate consent, together with its consequences, form a large part of the action; while the astonishing *dénouement* is reserved for the last scene of the play. Meanwhile, it should be observed that Nathan, too, has been struck by a strange resemblance of the Templar to a certain knight whom the Jew had once known; but he is for a time wholly unable to solve the mystery, or to ascertain the identity of the youth.

Al Hafi, the Dervish, is an eccentric Mahomedan devotee; shrewd, irascible, caustic and blunt in speech. He is possessed by a profound scorn of the world and its ways, and is an enthusiastic lover of chess. By a strange whim Saladin appoints him keeper of his privy purse, and dispenser of his lavish charities, on the ground that none but a beggar can sympathise with beggars, and fitly relieve their wants. He is a true friend and warm admirer of Nathan, and when he apprehends that Saladin has designs on the hoards of the rich Jew, he does all in his power to save his friend by a comical depreciation of his character; and entreats Nathan to quit the world and to accompany him as a devotee to the banks of the Ganges.

The Lay Brother of the convent is a totally illiterate European of the lower class; simple and upright, and given to expressing himself with a sort of quaint dry prolixity. Having first served as squire or groom to sundry crusading knights, he has now retired from the world, and become a lay brother of the convent at Jerusalem. In this capacity he is constantly being

employed by the Patriarch on various commissions, the base character of which revolts his honest soul. Notably he is deputed by that ecclesiastic to approach the Templar with proposals of an ignominious character, which, to his great delight, are roundly rejected by the knight. At a later stage of the action he makes to Nathan a revelation of a startling nature, which has a paramount influence on the final *dénouement* of the piece.

The sole remaining personage to be referred to is the Patriarch. He is depicted in colours of unmitigated atrocity. Base, bigoted, bloodthirsty, and unscrupulous, yet striving to cloak his depravity by means of Jesuitical sophistries alike transparent and detestable. Perceiving that the Templar enjoys unrestricted freedom, and has permission to move about almost at will in the country of the Saracens, he employs the lay brother to propose to him that he should act as a common spy, with the view of informing the Christian leaders of the strength or weakness of the enemy's position, the numbers of his forces, and his plan of campaign. And not only this, but with a cynical disregard of the fact that the young knight owes his life to the clemency of the Sultan, he actually proposes that the Templar should assassinate his benefactor. At a later stage of the action, on learning that Nathan has harboured a Christian maiden, and suffered her to grow up without religious training, he is clamorous for the life of the Jew, and in anticipation dooms him to the stake. This dark delineation of the Christian Patriarch is doubtless due to the poet's desire to throw into strong relief the noble character of Nathan; and it is not to be disputed that such prelates as Lessing's Patriarch were only too common in the earlier ages of the church, as witness the case of Gregory XIII. in the sixteenth century marching in procession along with his cardinals to sing *Te Deums* of praise and thanksgiving for the massacre of St. Bartholomew; whilst Heraclius of Auvergne, whom Lessing had in view in his representation of this character, was so infamous that the poet recorded his regret that in this piece he could not paint him in colours darker still.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

THE SULTAN SALADIN.

SITTAH, *his Sister.*

NATHAN, *a wealthy Jew of Jerusalem.*

RECHA, *his adopted Daughter.*

DAYA, *a Christian woman residing in the house of*

Nathan as companion to Recha.

A young Knight-Templar.

AL HAFI, *a Dervish.*

The Patriarch of Jerusalem.

A Lay Brother of a Convent in Jerusalem.

An Emir in the service of the Sultan.

Mamelukes of the Sultan.

The Scene is at Jerusalem.

I inform the students that they should not read any

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NATHAN THE WISE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Entrance-hall of NATHAN'S house. NATHAN just returned from a journey. DAYA meeting him.*

DAYA.¹

'Tis he—'tis Nathan!—God be thanked indeed
That now at last you are restored to us!

NATHAN.

Ay, Daya, thanked be God—but why 'at last' ?
Did I then purpose sooner to return;
Or *could* I have come sooner?—Babylon
Lies from Jerusalem good ten score leagues
As I perforce have had to shape my way,
Diverging now to right and now to left;
And gathering in of debts is no such task
As specially promotes the trader's speed,
Or can be settled in a moment's time.

DAYA.

Oh Nathan, oh what misery the while
Might have o'ertaken you! Your house——

¹ See Note 2.

NATHAN.

Took fire—

Ay, that I have already heard; God grant
That I've already heard the worst of it.

DAYA.

Well might it have been utterly consumed.

NATHAN.

In that case, Daya, we'd have built ourselves
A new one, and a better.

DAYA.

Ay, that's true;
But oh, our Recha was within an ace
Of burning with it!

NATHAN.

Who?—my Recha? Nay,
I had not heard of *that*. In such a case,
I ne'er had needed house. Within an ace
Of being burned to death! Ha! out with it;
She's burned indeed—confess she's burnt to death;
Kill me, but torture me no more. She's burned!

DAYA.

If so, would you have heard it from *my* lips?

NATHAN.

Then why appal me thus? Oh Recha dear;
Oh my own Recha!

DAYA.

Recha *yours*—your own?

NATHAN.

Oh may I never have to wean my tongue
From calling her my own!

DAYA.

Call you all else
That you possess, your own with no more right?

NATHAN.

Nought surely with a better right; all else
That I possess hath been bestowed on me
By nature or by chance; this prize alone
I owe to virtue.

DAYA.

Nathan, what a price
You make me pay for all your benefits;
If benefits conferred for such an end
Deserve the name!

NATHAN.

For such an end?—what end?

DAYA.

My conscience whispers——

NATHAN.

Daya, before all,
Hear me describe——

DAYA.

My conscience, I repeat——

NATHAN.

Hear me describe the dainty stuff I bought
For you in Babylon, so rich, so choice,
For Recha's self scarce bring I aught more rare.

DAYA.

What boots it, Nathan, since my conscience now
Refuses any longer to be hushed.

NATHAN.

And then I long to see your ecstasy
When you behold the bracelets and the ring,
The ear-rings and the chain I chose for you
As I passed through Damascus.

DAYA.

Ay, just so,
Tis just like you—for ever raining gifts.

NATHAN.

Take freely as I give, and say no more.

DAYA.

What—say no more?—who, Nathan, doubts that you
Are generosity and honour's self;
And yet——

NATHAN.

I'm nothing better than a Jew;
That's what you mean to say.

DAYA.

Nay, what I mean
You know full well——

NATHAN.

No more of it.

DAYA.

Well then,
Whate'er you do that's penal before God,
And I can neither alter nor prevent,
Be it upon *your* head.

NATHAN.

E'en be it so.
But, Daya, where is she ; where lingers she ?
Oh, if you have deceived me ! Knows she yet
That I am come ?

DAYA.

How can you ask me this ?
As yet she quivers in her every nerve ;
As yet her fancy pictures fire alone
In every image of her brain ; in sleep
Her spirit wakes, and when she wakes it sleeps ;
At times she seems less than a sentient thing,
Anon more than an angel.

NATHAN.

Ah, poor child.
How frail a thing is man !

DAYA.

This morn she lay
Long with her eyelids closed, and seemed as dead;
Sudden she started up and cried, 'Hark, hark!
I hear the camels of my father's train,
Ay, and his own dear kindly voice;' meanwhile
Her eye grew fixed again, and then her head,
Deserted now by her supporting hand,
Sank on the pillow. Hastening to the door,
I saw you coming—coming of a truth!
No wonder she divined it; all the time
Her soul hath dwelt on you and him.

NATHAN.

And him?

What him?

DAYA.

On him who plucked her from the flames

NATHAN.

Ay, who might that be—who and where is he?
Where is the man who saved my Recha's life?

DAYA.

'Twas a young Templar who, some days before,
Spared by the clemency of Saladin,
Had been brought hither as a captive.¹

NATHAN.

How!

A Templar, say you, and a Templar spared

¹ See Note 3.

By Saladin! Could Recha not be saved
By any smaller miracle than this!

DAYA.

Yet but for him, who boldly staked afresh
The life which lately had been spared to him,
She surely must have perished.

NATHAN.

Daya, say,
Where is he—where's the noble, generous man?
Lead me without delay unto his feet.
Oh tell me that you gave him on the spot
Whate'er of wealth I left you—gave him all,
And promised more—far more

DAYA.

How could we do't?

NATHAN.

You did it not!

DAYA.

He came, no man knows whence;
He went, no man knows whither. Destitute
Of all acquaintance with our house, he dashed,
Led by his ear alone, through smoke and flame,
Screened by his mantle, till he reached the spot
Where Recha shrieked for help. We deemed him
lost,
When lo! emerging from the blazing pile,
He stood before us, on his stalwart arm
Bearing our darling. Cold, and all unmoved

By our acclaim of thanks, he laid her down,
Passed through the throng of gaping witnesses,
And vanished.

NATHAN.

Not for ever, let us hope.

DAYA.

The first few following days he could be seen
Wandering up and down beneath the palms
Which yonder shade our risen Saviour's tomb.
With heartfelt rapture I approached his side,
Thanked him, extolled his valour, and conjured
That he would look at least once more upon
The grateful creature who could never rest
Until she might weep out her gratitude
Before his feet.

NATHAN.

What then?

DAYA.

'Twas all in vain;
To all our fond entreaties he was deaf;
And vented upon me such bitter taunts——

NATHAN.

That you recoiled in fear?

DAYA.

Nay, far from that;
For daily I accosted him afresh,
And every day I bore his taunts anew.

What brooked I not from him, what would I not
 Most willingly have brooked? But now for long
 He comes no more to roam beneath the palms
 Which cast their shade on our Redeemer's tomb,
 And none can tell where he is hidden now.
 You start—you ponder——

NATHAN.

Nay, I but reflect

How an adventure such as this must work
 Upon a heart like Recha's—spurned like this;
 At once attracted and repelled by him
 She's bound to prize so highly—of a truth,
 Her heart must be in conflict with her head,
 To say which sentiment should now prevail,
 Tender regret, or hatred of the man.
 Neither may triumph, then sheer fantasy,
 Sharing the strife, may breed a dreamy mood,
 Reasoning now with heart and now with head—
 Evil alternative!—unless I wrong
 My Recha, such will haply be her case;
 She'll wax a dreamer——

DAYA.

But she is so good,
 So lovable!

NATHAN.

A dreamer none the less.

DAYA.

Well, if you will, there *is* a special whim
 Most dear to her. She holds the Templar is

No human being, no mere thing of earth,
But one of those blest angels to whose ward
Her childish heart from infancy was fain
To think she was entrusted; and that he,
Rending the clouds in which he veils himself,
And hovering o'er her even in the fire,
Did suddenly assume the Templar's form,
And stand beside her—smile not; who can tell?
Or, spite your smiles, let her at least enjoy
A sweet delusion of a kind that's shared
Alike by Christian, Mussulman, and Jew.

NATHAN.

Sweet to me too. Go, honest Daya, go,
See what she does—I fain would speak with her—
And then I'll seek this guardian-angel out,
Who seems so wild and freaky; deigns he still
To wander here below with us, and yet
To wear his knightship in so rude a guise,
I'll find him out for sure, and bring him here.

DAYA.

You're undertaking much.

NATHAN.

If, after all,
The sweet delusion yield to sweeter truth—
And, trust me, Daya, to a human heart
A man's more dear than e'er an angel is—
You will not chide or rail on me at least
When you shall see our angel-doter cured.

DAYA.

You are so good, and yet so trickish too !
I go—but mark—see there—she comes herself.

SCENE II. — RECHA *and the Preceding.*

RECHA.

So, father, it is you in very sooth ;
Methought you'd haply sent your voice alone
To herald you. Why halt you now ; what hills,
What deserts, or what torrents part us still ?
You breathe within the self-same walls with me,
And yet you haste not to embrace your child ;
Poor Recha who was nearly burnt alive ;
Ay, nearly, only nearly burnt ; so shudder not—
Oh, 'twere a loathly death to burn alive !

NATHAN.

My child ! my darling child !

RECHA

You had to cross
Euphrates, Tigris, Jordan, and who knows
What other mighty streams—how oft have I
Trembled for you, before the fiery death
So nearly grazed my being ; but since then
A watery death seems by comparison
A pleasure, a refreshment, a delight.
And yet you are not drowned nor I am burned.

How we will now rejoice, and thank the Lord;
He surely bore you and your crazy bark
On his invisible angels' blessed wings
Across the traitorous streams, and the same God
Beckoned *my* angel that in patent shape
He should uplift me on his snow-white wing
And bear me through the flames.

NATHAN (*to himself*).

His snow-white wing!
Ay, ay, she means the Templar's snow-white robe,
Outspread before him——

RECHA.

Yes, in patent shape
He bore me safely through the raging flames,
Fanned harmless from me by his kindly wings,
Ay, I have seen an angel face to face,
My guardian angel.

NATHAN.

Recha of a truth
Were worthy of an angel-visitor,
Nor could she view in him a fairer form
Than he in her.

RECHA (*smiling*).

Whom would you flatter now,
The angel or yourself? ¹

¹ See Note 4.

NATHAN.

Yet had a man,
A common man of nature's daily stamp,
Vouchsafed this service to you, he had loomed
An angel in your eyes—he must and would.

RECHA.

Not such a one—oh, no; this was in truth
A veritable angel,—you yourself
Have ever taught me that such Beings are,
And that our heavenly Father wonders works
In their behalf who love His holy name,
And sure I love it.

NATHAN.

Ay, and He loves *you*,
And works for you, and for the like of you,
Miracles every hour; and has done so
From all eternity.

RECHA.

I love to hear 't.

NATHAN.

And yet though it might sound but natural,
An every-day and ordinary thing,
That a mere Templar had delivered you,
Would it be any less a miracle?
To me the greatest miracle is this,¹
That many a veritable miracle
By use and wont grows stale and commonplace.

¹ See Note 5.

But for this universal miracle,
A thinking man had ne'er confined the name
To those reputed miracles alone
Which startle children, ay, and older fools,
Ever agape for what is strange and new,
And out of nature's course.

DAYA.

Have you a mind
With subtle instances like this to daze
Her poor o'erheated brain?

NATHAN.

Nay, suffer me—
Were it not miracle enough for her
That she was rescued by a man who first
Himself was rescued by a miracle,
Ay, a prodigious one; for when before
Did Saladin e'er spare a Templar's life?
When did a Templar ask him for such grace,
Or hope for such, or tender for his life
More than the leathern girdle of his sword,
His dagger at the most?¹

RECHA.

This argument
Tells for my case, my father, for it proves
This was no Templar save in outward form;
For if no captive Templar can approach
Jerusalem except to certain death,
If none may wander here at liberty,
How could a Templar roaming round at will
Have rescued me that night?

¹ See Note 6.

NATHAN.

A shrewd conceit!

Now, Daya, speak. Did not I learn from you
That he was sent here as a prisoner?
Doubtless you know still more about his case.

DAYA.

Well, it is said so, but 'tis also said
The Sultan only spared the Templar's life
Because he bore a strange similitude
To a loved brother of his own, now dead.
But seeing full a score of years have passed
Since the said brother died, nor do we know
Even his name, or on what field he fell,
Methinks the tale is so incredible,
That there is nothing in the whole affair.

21
Twenty - years

NATHAN.

Daya, what's so incredible in this?
You surely would not flout a likely tale,
As others often do, to give your faith
To something else much more incredible,—
Saladin loves his kindred all so well,
Why should he not, then, in his younger years
Have loved some brother with a special love?
Are not two faces sometimes found alike,
And is a memory dead because 'tis old?
Since when has cause ceased to produce effect?
What find you so incredible in this?
Oh, my sage Daya, this can be to you
No whit a wonder,—'tis *your* miracles
Which make so huge a draft upon belief.

DAYA.

Mocking again !

NATHAN.

Because you're mocking me ;
Yet, Recha, your deliverance remains
A wonder, possible to Him alone
Who loves to govern by the slightest threads
The firmest plans and most unbridled wills
Of kings,—His sport, if not His mockery.

RECHA.

My father, if I err, you know full well
I err not willingly.

NATHAN.

I know it well.
Nay, you are ever teachable, my child.
Look you,—a forehead with a certain arch,¹
A nose that's chiselled in a special form,
A pair of eyebrows pencilled on a brow
Prominent or obtuse, a lineament,
A curve, a line, a dimple, or a mole,
These on a savage European face,
And lo, you're plucked from out an Asian fire !
Is *that* no marvel, marvel-seeking souls ?
Why put an angel to the trouble o't ?

DAYA.

Well, Nathan, if I may presume to speak,
For all you say, I'd ask you where's the harm

¹ See Note 7.

Of thinking that an angel rescued her,
And no mere man?—Sure thus we feel ourselves
Nearer the great inscrutable First Cause
Of our deliverance——

NATHAN.

Pride—and nought but pride!

The iron pot would fain be lifted up
With tongs of silver from the kitchen fire,
That it may deem itself a silver urn.
And where's the harm, you ask—the harm indeed!
Nay, rather might I ask you where's the good;
Since your pretence of feeling nearer God
Is either folly or rank blasphemy—
Ay, and such folly surely does work harm.
Come, hearken to me, and confess the truth;—
As to the being who has saved her life,
Whether it was an angel or a man,
I wot that you, and Recha more than you,
Would wish to do some service unto *him*;
Now, to an angel I would like to know
What service could ye do—thank him, perhaps;
Sigh to him, pray to him, or haply melt
In pious rapture at the thought of him;
Or you might fast upon his festival,
Spend alms in honour of him,—all in vain.
It strikes me that your neighbours and yourselves
Gain far more by your piety than he;
Your angel grows no fatter by your fasts,
Nor richer by your charitable doles,
More glorious by your pious ecstasies,
Or mightier by your faith—is that not so?
How different with a man!

DAYA.

I grant a mortal would have furnished us
More chances to requite his services,
And God knows how we yearned to do him good ;
But he would absolutely nought from us,
And needed nought ; serenely satisfied,
Sufficient to himself as angels are,
And only they can be.

RECHA.

And when at last
He disappeared entirely from our view——

NATHAN.

What ! disappeared ?—how so ? beneath the palms
Was seen no more ? how's this ?—Belike ye've
sought
To find him elsewhere.

DAYA.

Nay, we've not done that.

NATHAN.

Not done it, Daya !—Is it possible ?
Now see the mischief of your foolish dreams ,
Ye heartless visionaries, what if now
Your angel pines in sickness ?

RECHA.

Sickness !

DAYA.

No ;

That cannot be—oh no !

RECHA.

A shuddering chill
Creeps o'er me, Daya, and my brow, but now
So warm, is cold as ice.

NATHAN.

He is a Frank,
All unaccustomed to our burning clime;
He's young too, and unused to all the toils,
The fasts and vigils which his Order claims

RECHA.

But sick!

DAYA.

Nay, Nathan only would imply
That such might peradventure be his case.

NATHAN.

Ay, lying there with neither friends nor gold
To buy him friends.

RECHA.

Oh, father, say not so.

NATHAN.

Lies without tendance, sympathy, or help,
A prey to suffering, perhaps to death!

RECHA.

Where, where?

*This is a useless
man book, a
beant
the*

NATHAN.

He who for one he ne'er had seen,
Enough she was a mortal like himself,
Dashed 'mid the flames.

DAYA.

Nathan, be merciful.

NATHAN.

Who would not know the creature he had saved ;
Would not behold her, that he thus might shun
Her very thanks !

DAYA.

Oh, spare her, I entreat !

NATHAN.

Sought not to see her more, unless it were
That he might rescue her a second time ;
Enough that she was human——

DAYA.

Oh, forbear !

NATHAN.

And now has nought to soothe him in his death
Beyond the knowledge of his deed.

DAYA.

Forbear !

You're killing her.

NATHAN.

And you've been killing *him*;
Or may have done so. Oh, my Recha, hear,
'Tis wholesome physic that I give you now,
Not poison,—sure he lives—compose yourself,
Belike he is not sick—not even sick.

RECHA.

Oh, are you sure he's neither dead nor sick?

NATHAN.

Be sure he is not dead, for God rewards
E'en here below the good that men do here;
Now go, my child, but I would have you learn
That pious ecstasies are easier far
Than righteous action. Slack and feeble souls,
E'en when themselves unconscious of their case,
Are prone to godly raptures, if by these
They may eschew the toil of doing good.

RECHA.

Ah, father, leave me ne'er again alone.
And do you think perhaps he's only gone
Some otherwhere?

NATHAN.

Ay, certainly—go—go—
But who's yon Moslem who with curious eye
Scans my well-laden camels, know ye him?

DAYA.

Why, 'tis your Dervish

NATHAN.

Who?

DAYA.

Your Dervish, sure,
Your old chess partner, it is he indeed.

NATHAN.

Al Hafi,¹ mean you?—*that* is never he.

DAYA.

Ay, but he's now the Sultan's Treasurer.

NATHAN.

Al Hafi!—are you at your dreams again?
Nay, it is he in truth—he comes this way.
In with ye, quick. I wonder what he brings.

SCENE III.—NATHAN *and the* DERVISH.

DERVISH.

Ay, ope your eyes as wide as e'er you can.

NATHAN.

Is't thou, or is it not?—in pomp like this—
A Dervish!

DERVISH.

Wherefore not—can nothing then,
Nothing at all be made of Dervishes?

¹ See Note 8.

NATHAN.

Oh, possibly there might; but yet I thought
Your genuine Dervish never chose that men
Should make aught of him.

DERVISH.

By the Prophet's beard
That I'm no genuine Dervish well may be,
But when one must——

NATHAN.

How! *must*—a Dervish *must*!
No man should *must*—a Dervish least of all;
What *must* he, then?

DERVISH.

What he's implored to do;
And what he deems it right that he should do;
Even a Dervish *must* do that.

NATHAN.

By Heaven!
You speak the truth—come, let me hug thee, man;
I hope at least I still may call you friend.

DERVISH.

What, ere you know the thing I've now become?

NATHAN.

In spite of that.

DERVISH.

But what if I've become
A Jack-in-office, one whose friendship now
Might not be to your liking.

NATHAN.

If your heart
Be Dervish still, I'll take my chance of that;
As for your office, 'twere no more to me
Than is the suit of clothes in which you stand.

DERVISH.

Ay, but it still might claim your reverence.
What think you? guess—suppose you had a court,
What had your friend Al Hafi been therein?

NATHAN.

A Dervish pure and simple—nothing more;
Or at the most then possibly my cook.

DERVISH.

To spoil my skill in serving such as you!
Your cook, forsooth! Why not your pantler too?
Now own that Saladin appraises me
More shrewdly, seeing that I've now become
His Treasurer.

NATHAN.

You Treasurer to him!

DERVISH.

I mean

I rule his privy purse; his father still

Controls the public treasury, while I
Am fiscal of his house.

NATHAN.

His house is large.

DERVISH.

Ay, and 'tis larger even than you think,
For every beggar is a member on't.

NATHAN.

Yet Saladin so hates your mendicants——

DERVISH.

That he's resolved to extirpate the breed
Both root and branch, although the task may make
A beggar of himself.

NATHAN.

That's just my thought.

DERVISH.

Nay, he is one already, just as much
As e'er another, for his store each eve
Is something worse than empty, and the flood,
Which flowed so freely in the morn, by noon
Has long since ebbed.

NATHAN.

For channels suck it up,
At least in part, to fill or stop up which
Were hopeless both alike.

DERVISH.

You've hit it there.

NATHAN.

I know it well.

DERVISH.

Ay, it is bad enough
When kings are vultures amid carcasses,
But when 'mid vultures *they're* the carcasses
The case is ten times worse.

NATHAN.

Oh, Dervish, no;
Not so.

DERVISH.

'Tis very well to talk, but come,
What will you give me to resign my post
In your behalf?

NATHAN.

What does your post bring in?

DERVISH.

To me not much; but it would fatten you,
For when 'tis dead low water in his chest,
As oft's the case, you'd throw your sluices wide,
Pour in your loans, and take, in usury,
As much—as much as e'er you could desire.

NATHAN.

Usury even on my usury's gains?

DERVISH.

Just so.

NATHAN.

Till all my capital became
One teeming mass of compound usury.

DERVISH.

Does that not tempt you? If not, write forthwith
Our friendship's deed of separation now;
Nathan, I counted much on you.

NATHAN.

How so,

What mean you, Dervish?

DERVISH.

That you would have helped
To make me creditably fill my post
By access to your coffers—but I see
You shake your head.

NATHAN.

Let there be no mistake,
For here a clear distinction must be drawn;
Al Hafi, Dervish, ever welcome is
To aught that Nathan can command—but mark,
Al Hafi, minister of Saladin,¹
Who——

¹ See Note 9.

DERVISH.

Sure I guessed as much, and knew you were
As good as wise, as wise as you are good.
The twin Al Hafiſ you distinguish thus
Shall soon part company again, for see,
This robe of office Saladin bestowed,
Ere it be faded, or reduced to rags
Such as a genuine Dervish ought to wear,
Shall grace a peg here in Jerusalem,
While I, barefoot and scantily attired,
Shall with my teachers tread the burning sands
Of distant Ganges.

NATHAN.

That were like yourself.

DERVISH.

Ay, and play chess with them.

NATHAN.

Your greatest bliss.

DERVISH.

Now think what tempted me to take the post.
Think you I did so for the love of pelf;
That I myself no more might need to beg,
Or amid beggars play the wealthy man?
Could that have metamorphosed in a trice
The wealthiest beggar to a poor rich man?

NATHAN.

Not that, I trow.

DERVISH.

No—it was something else,
And something even more absurd than that;
I felt me flattered as I ne'er had been,
Flattered by Saladin's kind-hearted whim.

NATHAN.

And what was that?

DERVISH.

A beggar, so he said,
And such alone, could tell how beggars feel;
Only a beggar by experience knew
How to bestow on beggars gracefully.
My predecessor had been much too cold,
Too rough, and gave so rudely when he gave;
He probed each case too harshly, ne'er content
To witness want, but still would know its cause,
And thus proportionate his cautious dole.
'Al Hafi,' so he said, 'will not do that,
And Saladin in him will not appear
So circumspect and so unkindly kind.
He is not like those choked-up conduit-pipes
Which issue forth in foul and fitful jets
The streams which entered them so clear and calm.
Al Hafi thinks, Al Hafi feels as I.'
'Thus sweetly trilled the fowler's pipe, until
The fowl was netted—idiot that I am;
Dupe of a dupe!

NATHAN:

Nay, softly, Dervish, now!

DERVISH.

What ! were it not the rankest foolery,
By thousands to oppress and crush mankind,
Rob them, destroy them, torture them, yet play
The philanthrope to individual men !¹
Were it not impious folly, too, to ape
The goodness of Almighty God that's shed
Without distinction upon good and bad,
Benignly shed in sunshine and in shower
On field and plain and wilderness alike,
Yet not possess His never-failing hand.
Were that not foolery ?

NATHAN.

Enough—desist.

DERVISH.

Nay, let me dwell on my own folly too.
Were it not folly if I sought to find
The better side of follies such as these,
Only because of such a better side
To share such follies—ha ! now, what of that ?

NATHAN.

Hie thee, Al Hafi, quick as e'er you can,
Back to your deserts, for 'mid men, I fear,
You shortly may unlearn to be a man.

DERVISH.

You're right—I feared that very thing myself;
Good-bye.

¹ See Note 10.

NATHAN.

But why such haste? Al Hafi, wait;
Think you your desert's like to run away?—
Would he but hear me! ho! Al Hafi, ho!—
He's gone! and fain would I have asked of him
About our Templar, for the chances are
He knows the man.

SCENE IV.—DAYA, *in haste to* NATHAN.

DAYA.

Oh, Nathan, Nathan!

NATHAN.

Well,

What would you now?

DAYA.

He has appeared again;
He's there once more!

NATHAN.

Who, Daya, who?

DAYA.

He, he!

NATHAN.

He, he—why, *he's* are plenty; but I trow
Your he's your only he—this should not be,
Not if he were an angel past dispute.

DAYA.

Beneath the palms he wanders once again,
And ever and anon he plucks the dates.

NATHAN.

And eats them, sure, as any Templar would.

DAYA.

Oh, Nathan, wherefore will you tease me thus?
Her hungry eye espied him in a trice
Behind the thickly interlacing palms,
And follows him unswervingly. She begs,
Conjures that you will go to him at once;
Oh, hasten—from the casement she will sign
Whether he still walks there, or wends his steps
Farther afield. Oh haste you, Nathan, haste!

NATHAN.

Just as I've lighted from my camel?—nay,
Would that be seemly? better go yourself,
And tell him I've returned. Be well assured
The worthy youth has only shunned my house
Because its lord was absent; and that now
He'll gladly come when Recha's father thus
Invites him here,—go, tell him that I do,
And from my heart.

DAYA.

'Twere vain; he'll never come,
Since, to be brief, he comes to ne'er a Jew.

NATHAN.

Go, ne'ertheless—at least detain him there;
Or, failing that, then hold him in your eye;
Go, go at once—I'll follow you anon.

(NATHAN enters his house. DAYA sets forth.)

SCENE V.—*An open place shaded by palm trees. The*
TEMPLAR *pacing up and down beneath the palms. At*
a little distance a lay brother of the convent, dogging his
steps, and seemingly desirous of addressing him.

TEMPLAR.

That fellow dogs me not for pastime. See
How greedily he leers upon my hands!

(*To the Friar.*)

Good brother—or good father, possibly——

LAY BROTHER.

Simple lay brother, sir, at your command.

TEMPLAR.

Well, my good brother, had I aught myself—
But, as God lives, I've nothing.

LAY BROTHER.

All the same,
Right hearty thanks; God give you thousand-fold
What you would give; the will and not the gift
Doth constitute the giver; and besides,
I was not sent unto your Excellence
To crave a dole.

*The boy who will
read it*

TEMPLAR.

So then you *have* been sent?

LAY BROTHER.

Ay—from the cloister——

TEMPLAR.

Where I even now
Hoped to receive a slender pilgrim's meal.

LAY BROTHER.

The tables were already occupied ;
But come, I pray you, back with me.

TEMPLAR.

Why so?
'Tis true 'tis long since I have tasted flesh,
But what of that—thank God the dates are ripe.

LAY BROTHER.

Be cautious, sir, I pray you, with that fruit ;
Too freely used, 'tis hurtful, for it clogs
The spleen, and genders melancholy blood.

TEMPLAR.

What if I loved the melancholy mood ?
But surely, sir, you were not sent to me
To sound this wholesome warning.

LAY BROTHER.

No—I'm sent
To sound *you*—I may say, to feel your pulse.

TEMPLAR.

What! can you say it to my very face?

LAY BROTHER.

And wherefore not?

TEMPLAR (*aside*).

A crafty friar this——

(*To the Friar.*)

Boasts then your convent many more like you?

LAY BROTHER.

I know not—but, dear sir, I must obey.

TEMPLAR.

And so you just obey, and split no hairs?

LAY BROTHER.

Were it obedience else, dear sir?

TEMPLAR (*aside*).

See now,

Simplicity is ever in the right.

(*To the Friar.*)

Yet I presume you may confide to me
Who is the man so keen to probe my case;
I'll swear 'tis not yourself.

LAY BROTHER.

Would such a wish
Beseech or profit *me*?

TEMPLAR.

Whom, then, I pray,
Would it bescem or profit, since he is
So curious about me—who's the man?

LAY BROTHER.

The Patriarch, I fancy, for 'twas he
Who sent me after you.

TEMPLAR.

The Patriarch!
Knows he no better what the crimson cross
On the white mantle means?

LAY BROTHER.

Why, *I* know that.

TEMPLAR.

Well, I'm a Templar, and a prisoner,
Taken at 'Tebnin¹—if you care to know—
The fortress we so keenly wished to win
In the last moments of the armistice,
That we might then storm Sidon, I may add.
I was the twentieth taken, and alone
Was spared by Saladin. The Patriarch now
Knows all he needs to know of me; nay, more
Than he can need to know.

LAY BROTHER.

But hardly more
Than he already knows. He now would know

¹ See Note II.

Why Saladin was moved to spare your life,
And yours alone.

TEMPLAR.

Do I myself know that?
Bare-necked I kneeled already on my cloak
To meet the fatal stroke, when Saladin
Scanned me more closely, bounded to my side,
And made a signal to his Mamelukes;
They raised me up and struck my fetters off;
I made as if to thank him, but I saw
His eyes suffused with tears, and there he stood
Mute as myself,—he left the spot,—I lived,—
What means this riddle let the Patriarch
Unriddle for himself.

LAY BROTHER.

He thence concludes
God has reserved you for some weighty ends;
For glorious things.

TEMPLAR.

For glorious things, forsooth!
To snatch a Jewish wench from out the flames;
Escort on Sinai gaping pilgrim bands,
And such-like feats.

LAY BROTHER.

The glories are as yet
To follow, and so far you've not done ill;
Perhaps the Patriarch himself designs
Some far more weighty matters for you now.

TEMPLAR.

Ay, brother, think you so? he has, belike,
Already hinted it to you.

LAY BROTHER.

He has; but first
I am to sound you, whether you're the man
Would suit his purpose.

TEMPLAR.

Well then, sound away.
(*Aside.*)
I'd gladly see how the good brother sounds.

LAY BROTHER.

The shortest plan will be to tell you plain
The Patriarch's purpose.

TEMPLAR.

Well?

LAY BROTHER.

He wishes you
To bear a certain letter——

TEMPLAR.

Wishes *me*
To bear a letter! I'm no courier.
Is *this* the weighty end more glorious far
Than rescuing Jewish maids?

LAY BROTHER.

It must be so;

For, says the Patriarch, this letter is
Of passing weight to Christendom entire;
The man who bears it safely, so he says,
God of a surety will reward in heaven
With a peculiar crown, and this, he says,
No man is worthier of than you.

TEMPLAR.

Than I!

LAY BROTHER.

Since, to deserve this special crown, he says,
Scarce any man's more fit than you——

TEMPLAR.

Than I!

LAY BROTHER.

You're free, can reconnoitre here at will,
You understand how towns are to be stormed,
And how defended; you can estimate
Better than any, says the Patriarch,
The strength and weakness of the inner wall,
The second wall, late reared by Saladin,
And to the champions of God, he says,
Describe it all.

TEMPLAR.

Good brother, might I ask
To know the further tenor of the note?

LAY BROTHER.

Well, I can scarcely tell you that myself ;
It is intended for King Philip's hands ;¹
It seems the Patriarch—sure I've wondered oft
How such a holy man, whose wont it is
To live for heaven alone, can condescend
At the same time to be so well informed
Of worldly things ; it must revolt his soul——

TEMPLAR.

Well then, the Patriarch ?

LAY BROTHER.

Precisely knows
And surely, how and where, and in what strength,
And from what quarter, Saladin intends
To open the campaign in case the war
Breaks out afresh.

TEMPLAR.

He does ?

LAY BROTHER.

And 'tis his wish
To let King Philip know how matters stand,
That he may proximately weigh the risks,
And judge if it were better to renew
With Saladin, whate'er the cost, the truce
Your Order lately did so boldly break.

¹ See Note 12.

TEMPLAR.

Oh, what a Patriarch ! Ay, ay, I see
The dear and daring man would make of me
No ordinary courier, but—a spy.
Now, worthy brother, tell your Patriarch
That in so far as you can make me out
This is no job for me—that I am bound
Still to regard myself a prisoner;
And that a Templar's single duty is
To wield the sword with valour in the fray,
Not play the common spy.

LAY BROTHER.

I thought as much;
Nor can I take your answer much amiss.
But now the best's to come : the Patriarch
Has somehow pried out how the fort is named,
And where 'tis situate on Lebanon,
In which the store of treasure is preserved
Wherewith the prudent sire of Saladin
Maintains his forces and defrays the cost
Of all his warfare. Saladin, it seems,
Repairs from time to time by hidden paths,
With slender escort, to that mountain fort—
You follow me?

TEMPLAR.

Not I !

LAY BROTHER.

The Patriarch thinks
It were an easy matter now to seize
On Saladin, and make an end of him.

What—do you shudder? Oh, a worthy brace
Of godly Maronites are quite prepared,
If but a valiant man would lead them on,
To venture it.

TEMPLAR.

And so your Patriarch
Has chosen me to be that valiant man?

LAY BROTHER.

And then he thinks that out of Ptolemais
King Philip could most fitly lend a hand
To help the work.

TEMPLAR.

What, brother, this to me !
To me !—have you not heard—this moment heard,
The monstrous debt of gratitude I owe
To Saladin ?

LAY BROTHER.

Oh yes, I heard.

TEMPLAR.

And yet ?

LAY BROTHER.

The Patriarch thinks all this is very well;
But that God's service and your Order's claims——

TEMPLAR.

These alter not the case—these ne'er enjoin
A deed of villainy !

LAY BROTHER.

No—surely not;
Only—so thinks the Patriarch—villainy
In sight of man 's not so in sight of God.

TEMPLAR.

That I should owe my life to Saladin,
And yet take his!

LAY BROTHER.

Ay, but the Patriarch says
Saladin's still the foe of Christendom,
And never possibly can win the right
To be a friend to you.

TEMPLAR.

A friend—well, no—
Yet one to whom I may not prove a knave,
A most ungrateful knave.

LAY BROTHER.

Oh, surely no—
And yet the Patriarch holds a man is quit
Of gratitude before both God and man
Whene'er the service which involved the debt
Hath not been rendered for his sake alone;
And when 'tis known, so thinks the Patriarch,
That Saladin hath only spared your life
Because a something in your face and mien
Recalled his long-lost brother to his mind—

TEMPLAR.

And so the Patriarch knows *this* too,—well,
 Ah, were it so in sooth ! Ah, Saladin,
 If nature formed one feature of my face
 In the resemblance of your brother's looks,
 Should nought within me correspond thereto ?
 And what might correspond, could I suppress
 To do a pleasure to a Patriarch ?
 Nature, thou lie'st not thus ; nor in His works
 Doth God thus contradict Himself—go, brother, go ;
 Rouse not my gall—begone, I say, begone !

LAY BROTHER.

I go—and go more happy than I came—
 Forgive me, sir, but think, we cloister folk
 Must needs obey our Patriarch's commands.

SCENE VI.—*The TEMPLAR and DAYA; the latter of whom has for some time been watching the former at a distance and now approaches him.*

DAYA (*to herself*).

Yon monk, methinks, left him in no sweet mood,
 Yet I must dare my errand.

TEMPLAR.

Ha ! what's this ?
 The adage lies not—monk and woman still,
 Woman and monk are the Fiend's fellest claws ;
 To-day he flings me in the clutch of both.

DAYA.

Is't possible, my noble knight; is't you? Thank
God,
A thousand thanks to God,—but where, I pray,
Where have you hidden all this time? I trust
You've not been ill.

TEMPLAR.

Not I.

DAYA.

Then well?

TEMPLAR.

Quite well.

DAYA.

Oh, we've been anxious upon your account!

TEMPLAR.

Have you in sooth?

DAYA.

You've surely been away.

TEMPLAR.

Right.

DAYA.

And came back to-day?

TEMPLAR.

No, yesterday.

DAYA.

Our Recha's father too returned this day;
And now I trust that she may hope——

TEMPLAR.

For what?

DAYA.

For what she oft hath bid me ask of you;
Her father too now earnestly entreats
That you will come—he's fresh from Babylon
With twenty camels bearing precious loads
Of gems, and stuffs, and costly spices, such
As Persia, Syria, and far Cathay¹
Alone can furnish forth.

TEMPLAR.

I purchase nought.

DAYA.

His people honour him like any prince;
And yet I wonder that they call him aye
Nathan the Wise, and not in preference
Nathan the Rich.

TEMPLAR.

Possibly rich and wise
Are all the same to them.

DAYA.

But more than all
They ought to have entitled him the Good;

¹ See Note 13.

For oh you cannot think how good he is;
Soon as he learned our Recha's debt to you,
What in that grateful moment would he not
Have done or given to guerdon you!

TEMPLAR.

Indeed.

DAYA.

Try him, sir, come and see.

TEMPLAR.

But then how soon
Such moments melt away!¹

DAYA.

Think you, sir knight,
Had he not been so kindly and so good,
I e'er had brooked to stay with him so long?
Think you I know not what's a Christian's place?
No, it was never o'er my cradle crooned
That I should find my way to Palestine
With my late husband, for no worthier end
Than there to wait upon a Jewish girl.
My husband, sir, was then a well-born squire
In Kaiser Frederick's host——

TEMPLAR.

By birth a Swiss,
Who had at once the honour and the joy
Of choking in the self-same puny stream
With his Imperial Majesty himself.²

¹ See Note 14.

² See Note 15.

Woman, how oft you've told me this before;
Will you then never cease to pester me?

DAYA.

Pester you—oh my God!

TEMPLAR.

Ay, pester me.
I'm now resolved never to see you more,
Nor hear your prate—nor do I choose to be
Incessantly reminded of a deed
I never meant to do; the thought of which
Is a continual riddle to myself.
I would not wish now to repent of it;
But mark, should such a case occur again,
You'll have yourself to blame if I should act
Not quite so promptly, but consider first
And ponder well, and rather leave what burns
To burn to death.

DAYA.

Now God forbid!

TEMPLAR.

Henceforth
Do me the kindness at the least, I pray,
To cease to know me more; and more than all,
To save me from this father—Jew is Jew,
And I'm a downright Swabian—for the maid,
Her image long ago has left my thoughts,
If e'er it dwelt there.

DAYA.

Ay, but yours still dwells
In hers.

TEMPLAR.

What business has it there?

DAYA.

Who knows?
Folk are not always what they seem to be.

TEMPLAR.

They're seldom any better.

(He is about to go.)

DAYA.

Oh, sir, wait,
Wherefore such haste?

TEMPLAR.

Woman, make not the palms
Hateful to me, where I'm so fain to roam.

DAYA.

Then go, thou German bear—go—go—and yet
I must not lose the traces of the beast.

(She follows him at a distance.)

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Sultan's Palace.*SALADIN *and* SITTAH *playing chess.*

SITTAH.

My Saladin, oh how you play to-day!

SALADIN.

Not well? Methought——

SITTAH.

Ay, well enough for me;

Yet hardly even that—take back that move.

SALADIN.

Why so?

SITTAH.

Because unless you do, your knight

Will be exposed.

SALADIN.

You're right—well, thus.

SITTAH.

But now

My pawn will fork.¹

SALADIN.

Ay, right again—then check !

SITTAH.

But that won't help you. I advance, and now
You're as you were.

SALADIN.

From this dilemma, sure,
There's no escaping with impunity;
Well, take my knight.

SITTAH.

I will not take him now;
I'll pass him by.

SALADIN.

Small thanks to you—that move
Is more important to you than the knight.

SITTAH.

Perhaps.

SALADIN.

But reckon not without your host;
For see, I'd wager you did not expect
This move of mine.

¹ See Note 16.

SITTAH.

No—how could I suppose
That you were weary of your queen.

SALADIN.

My queen?

SITTAH.

Ay, now 'tis plain that I this day shall win
My thousand dinars,¹ if I win no more.

SALADIN.

How so?

SITTAH.

How can you ask, since purposely
You lose with all your might—and yet I gain
But little by it, for besides the fact
That play like this has little pleasure in't,
E'en when I lose I ever gain the most,
Since, to console me for my want of skill,
You ever give me double what I've lost.

SALADIN.

But look you, little sister, when you lose,
Perhaps you do it purposely as well.

SITTAH.

Well, well, your generosity at least
Perhaps may be the reason, brother mine,
That I've not learned to play a better hand.

¹ See Note 17.

SALADIN.

But we neglect our game; come, finish it.

SITTAH.

Is that so,—well then, check, and double check!

SALADIN.

I never thought of this discovered check,¹
By which I fear I'm like to lose my queen,
And game as well.

SITTAH.

But could you help yourself?

Let's see.

SALADIN.

No, sister, you may take the queen;
She never was a lucky piece to me.

* SITTAH.

Only at chess?

SALADIN.

Take her—it matters not,
Now all my other pieces are secure.

SITTAH.

Nay, nay, you've taught me better, Saladin,
The courtesy that's ever due to queens.²

¹ See Note 16.

² See Note 18.

SALADIN.

Take her or leave her, even as you will,
But she is mine no more.

SITTAH.

But where's the need?
Here's check to you again—check, check!

SALADIN.

Go on!

SITTAH.

Ay, check, and no mistake!

SALADIN.

And checkmate too.

SITTAH.

Not quite; you still can interpose your knight,
And try again—yet do whate'er you please,
I fear 'tis all the same.

SALADIN.

Ay ay, you've won,
And Hafi now must pay—send for him quick.
Sittah, you were not altogether wrong,
I played too absently; I was distraught.
Why must they ever give us this plain set
Of formless pieces, representing nought,
And barren of suggestion to the mind?
Or did they fancy that I meant to play

With the Imaum? ¹—perhaps—but losers still
Must ever seek excuses; and I fear
'Twas not the formless pieces made me lose;
But your superior skill, your quicker eye,
And greater concentration won the day.

SITTAH.

Thus would you dull the sting of your defeat?
Enough, you were distraught, and more than I.

SALADIN.

Than you, forsooth!—what should make *you* distraught?

SITTAH.

Not cares like yours, I own. But, Saladin,
When shall we play as keenly as we used?

SALADIN.

Nay, let us play more keenly than before;
Or think you that the war will hinder it?
No, let it burst as quickly as it may;
It is not I renewed it. Willingly
Had I prolonged the armistice afresh;
And at the same time willingly had won
The man who's fit to be my Sittah's mate,
And that is Richard's brother ²—none but he—
My Richard's brother!

¹ See Note 19.

² See Note 20.

SITTAH.

You are ever fain
To praise your Richard.

SALADIN.

Had his sister now
Chanced to become our brother Melek's bride,¹
Oh what a house the union would have formed !
Best of the best, and first of all the earth.
Mark me, I'm nothing loath to vaunt my race;
I'm worthy of my friends. A stock like that
Had yielded sons who had been men indeed !

SITTAH.

Did I not ever flout the specious dream ?
You know not, *will not* know, what Christians are;
Their pride is to be Christians, never men;
Ay, even that which since their Founder's time
Hath tinged their superstition with a touch
Of pure humanity, is prized by them
Never because 'tis human, but because
'Twas preached and practised by their Jesus Christ.
'Tis well for them he was so rare a man;
Well that they take his virtues upon trust;
But what to them the virtues of their Christ ?
'Tis not his virtues, but his name alone
They seek to spread, that it may dominate
And cloud the names of other noble men;
Ay, 'tis the name, the name of Christ alone
Your Christian cares about.

¹ See Note 21.

SALADIN.

By this you mean
They would insist that you and Melek both
Should bear the name before ye could presume
As man or wife to love a Christian?

SITTAH.

Just so—as if a Christian alone
Can know the love which the Creator's hand
Hath planted in the breast of man and wife!

SALADIN.

The Christians hold such strange absurdities
They well might credit this. And yet you err;
For 'tis the Templars, not the Christians,
As Templars, mark me, not as Christians,
Who foil my purpose here, refusing still
To part with Acre from their greedy clutch;
Acre, which Richard's sister should have brought
As dowry to our Melek; while, to mask
Their knightly aims, they needs must play the monk,
The guileless monk, forsooth!—and now, to snatch
A fleeting triumph, they will scarce await
The termination of the armistice.
So be it, sirs, 'tis all the same to me,
Were all else only as it ought to be.

SITTAH.

Brother, what else goes wrong with you; what else
Could disconcert you thus?

SALADIN.

What else but that
Which still hath disconcerted all my schemes;
I've been to Lebanon and seen our sire;¹
He sinks beneath his cares.

SITTAH.

Alas, alas!

SALADIN.

He must succumb, with straits on every hand;
All fails, now here, now there——

SITTAH.

What straits?—what fails?

SALADIN.

What else but what I almost scorn to name;
Which, when 'tis mine, seems so superfluous,
And, when it lacks, so indispensable.
Where is Al Hafi now, hath no one gone
To call him here? Oh hateful, cursed gold!—
Ha! here he comes, and in the nick of time.

¹ See Note 22.

SCENE II.—AL HAFI, SALADIN, *and* SITTAH.

AL HAFI.

I trust the Egyptian moneys have arrived,
And in good store.

SALADIN.

What, have you word of them?

AL HAFI.

Not I; but yet I thought they must have come,
And that belike you now had sent for me
To take them over.

SALADIN.

Well, in any case,
You'll pay a thousand dinars unto Sittah.

AL HAFI.

What! pay instead of get; well, that is good;
Why, this is something worse than getting nought.
To Sittah, too,—why that? what, lost again?
Once more a loser at your chess? ay, ay,
There lies the board.

SITTAH.

Perhaps you grudge my luck.

AL HAFI (*examining the chess-board; while SALADIN paces
up and down, plunged in thought*).

Grudge you, forsooth! when, sure, you know full
well——

SITTAH (*with earnest signs to him*).

Hush, Hafi, hush !

AL HAFI.

You grudge it to yourself !¹

SITTAH.

Oh, Hafi, silence !

AL HAFI.

Were the white men yours ?
And you gave check ?

SITTAH (*aside*).

Thank goodness, Saladin
Hath not perceived his drift.

AL HAFI.

Is it his move ?

SITTAH (*in his ear*).

Oh, Hafi, tell him I shall get the gold.

AL HAFI (*still intent upon the board*).

Oh yes, you'll get it as you always do.

SITTAH.

How ! are you mad ?

¹ See Note 23.

AL HAFI.

The game's not over yet;
Why, Saladin, you've still a chance to win.

SALADIN (*with abrupt indifference*).
No matter, pay the money to her.

AL HAFI.

Pay !
Why, there's your queen !

SALADIN (*testily*).
Ay, but she doesn't count;
She's lost.

SITTAH (*aside to AL HAFI*).

Oh, Hafi, make believe at least,
And say that I may send to fetch the gold.

AL HAFI (*absorbed in contemplation of the board*).
Just so, as formerly.—But though the queen
May count no longer, yet in spite of that
Saladin is not mate.

SALADIN (*stepping forward and dashing down the chess-board*).

Oh yes, I am,
And choose to be so.

AL HAFI.

Well, then, please yourself;
Your play is like your payment of the stakes,
Both sham alike.

SALADIN (*to SITTAH*).

What's this he mutters now?

SITTAH (*while she makes signs to AL HAFI*).

You know him surely, prone to bristle up,
Exacting, nay, a trifle jealous too.

SALADIN.

Jealous of you! my sister! sure not that;
Hafi, what's this,—you jealous?

AL HAFI.

Well, perhaps
It may be so. I'd gladly have her brain,
And gladly have her heart as well.

SITTAH.

Howbeit,
As yet he's ever paid my claims in full;
And will do so to-day, misdoubt him not;
Now go, Al Hafi, go; I fain would send
To fetch the gold.

AL HAFI.

No; I'll no longer play
A farce like this; he's sure to find it out
Sooner or later.

SALADIN.

Find out what, and whom?

SITTAH.

Was this your promise, Hafi? is it thus
You keep your word?

AL HAFI.

Well, well, but could I guess
The jest would go so far?

SALADIN.

Come, out with it!

SITTAH.

Al Hafi, I implore you, be discreet.

SALADIN.

Nay, this is something strange; what can it be
Sittah so vehemently deprecates,
So passionately of a stranger begs;
Ay, of a Dervish, rather than of me
Her brother?—Hafi, I command you now
To tell me what it is—speak, Dervish, speak!

SITTAH.

My brother, suffer not a little thing
To move you more than it is meet it should.
You know right well I have full many a time
Won just as much as this from you at chess;
But since just now I do not need the gold,
And since just now the gold in Hafi's chest
Is none too plentiful, I've let it stand
Unpaid as yet; but be you well assured
I am not minded, brother, to bestow
My gains on you, or Hafi, or his chest.

AL HAFI.

Were this but all!

SITTAH.

Well, sundry other sums
I've left as a deposit in his hands.
The stipend, too, which you assigned to me
For some few months hath lain with him on trust.

AL HAFI.

E'en that's not all.

SALADIN.

Not all?—then tell me all.

AL HAFI.

Whilst we've awaited these Egyptian sums——

SITTAH (*to* SALADIN).

Why hear his talk?

AL HAFI.

Not only has she ta'en
Nothing from me——

SALADIN.

The noble girl has made
Advances in addition!—is it so?

AL HAFI.

Ay, she's maintained the cost of all your court;
Unaided paid your whole expenditure.

SALADIN (*embracing* SITTAH).

Ah that indeed is like you, sister mine!

SITTAH.

Who but my brother made me rich enough
To do so?

AL HAFI.

Ay, and soon he'll make of her
A pauper like himself.

SALADIN.

A pauper—I !
When had I ever more or less than now ?
A robe, a sword, a charger, and a God ;
What need I more ? and these I ne'er can lack.
And yet, Al Hafi, I could scold you too.

SITTAH.

Oh, brother, scold him not—I would to God
That I could thus allay our father's cares.

SALADIN.

Ah, now you dash my happiness again.
Nothing is lacking, or *can* lack, to me ;
But he lacks all, and we all share his lack.
What shall I do ?—belike it will be long
Ere Egypt sends the gold,—why this should be
God only knows, for all is peaceful there.—
I can retrench, reduce, economise,
And gladly, when it touches me alone,
And not my friends—but what can that avail ?
A horse, a cloak, a sword, I still must have ;
And nought can be abated from my God ;
He is content with such a little thing ;

My heart alone—Hafi, I counted much
Upon your surplus.

AL HAFI.

Surplus!—say yourself
If you would not have had me soon impaled,
Or strangled at the least, had I been caught
With surpluses—downright embezzlement¹
Had been a safer thing to venture on.

SALADIN.

Well, what must now be done? Say, could you not
Have borrowed first of all from some one else
Than Sittah?

SITTAH.

Brother, think you I'd be robbed
Of such a privilege—and that by him?
I still would claim it—I am not as yet
Entirely stranded.

SALADIN.

Not entirely yet!
That still was wanting to complete the wrong.
Haste you, Al Hafi, go forthwith—contrive;
Collect from whom you can and how you can;
Go, borrow, promise; only borrow not
From those whom I've enriched; to ask from them
Might look like reclamation of my gifts.
Go to the greediest, such are ever sure
Most readily to lend, since well they know
How well their moneys fatten in my hands.

¹ See Note 24.

AL HAFI.

I know none such.

SITTAH.

It just occurs to me
I've somehow heard, Al Hafi, that your friend
Has now returned.

AL HAFI (*with surprise*).

My friend, say you, my friend?
And who might that be?

SITTAH.

Your belauded Jew.

AL HAFI.

A Jew—belauded—and by me?

SITTAH.

The man—
How well I recollect your very words—
The man to whom his God hath richly given
At once the greatest of all earthly gifts
And the most worthless.

AL HAFI.

Said I so?—by that
I wonder what I could have meant.

SITTAH.

You meant
That wisdom was the greatest gift of God,
Riches the smallest.

AL HAFI.

What! this of a Jew!
When could I e'er have said so of a Jew?

SITTAH.

You said it of your Nathan—sure you did.

AL HAFI.

Of Nathan? well, of *him* perhaps I did;
I did not think of him. But is it true
That he is once more home again at last?
If so, you may be sure he's prospered well;
Ay, ay, his folk have dubbed him long the Wise,
The Rich as well.

SITTAH.

They call him now the Rich
More than they ever did; the city rings
With tidings of the rich and costly wares
He now has brought.

AL HAFI.

If he's once more the Rich,
Then of a truth he'll be once more the Wise.

SITTAH.

What think you, Hafi, why not go to *him*?

AL HAFI.

For what?—to borrow?—ah, you little know
What Nathan is—*he* lend!—his wisdom lies
Just in the fact that he will lend to none.

SITTAH.

Yet, Hafi, formerly you drew of him
A very different picture.

AL HAFI.

Well, at need
He'll lend you wares—but gold—oh never that;
Oh no, not gold. And yet in other points,
He is a Jew unlike all other Jews;
Has common sense, knows life, plays well at chess;
Yet he excels in bad as well as good
All other Jews besides—count not on him.
He gives unto the poor, 'tis true, and gives
As much perhaps as Saladin himself,
Or if not quite as much, as willingly;
Without distinction, too, since Frank and Jew,
Parsee and Mussulman, are all alike
To Nathan.

SITTAH.

Say you so?

SALADIN.

How comes it then
That I've ne'er heard before of such a man?

SITTAH.

Would he refuse to lend to Saladin?
To Saladin who asks for others' needs,
And never for his own.

AL HAFI.

Ay, here again
You see the Jew, the common sordid Jew.
Trust me, where generosity comes in
He's downright jealous of all other men,
As if he fain would draw unto himself
Each *God reward you* that's exclaimed on earth;
And for this very cause he lends to none
That he may ever have the means to give.
Since charity's commanded by his law,
Not mere complaisance, charity itself
Makes him the most ungracious churl on earth.
'Tis true that he and I for some time back
Have been a trifle strange, but never think
That I for this would do him any wrong;
He's good for all things else, but not for this,
Not for a lender. Now I'll go at once
And knock at other doors—ay, sure enough,
I now bethink me of a certain Moor
Who's rich and greedy too. I'll go to him.

SITTAH.

But, Hafi, why such haste?

SALADIN.

E'en let him go.

SCENE III.—SALADIN *and* SITTAH.

SITTAH.

He hastes away as if his only wish
Were to escape. I wonder what he means ;
Think you he honestly decried the Jew,
Or that he only seeks to put us off ?

SALADIN.

Why ask me this ? I hardly know as yet
Of whom you talked—until this very day
I never heard the name of this your Jew,
Your Nathan.

SITTAH.

Is it possible a man
Should be unknown to you, of whom 'tis said
He hath ransacked the tombs of Solomon
And David too ; and by a word of might,
A secret spell, hath power to burst their seals ;
From thence he brings to light, from time to time,
The boundless stores of riches which bespeak
No lesser source than these.

SALADIN.

Nay, if the man
Hath dug his boundless riches out of tombs,
Be sure it was not out of Solomon's
Or David's either,—they but hold the bones
Of fools——

SITTAH.

Or miscreants, perhaps—and yet,
Whate'er the source, 'tis more productive far,
More inexhaustible, than Mammon's cave.

SALADIN.

Ay, for he is a trader, as I heard.

SITTAH.

His dromedaries fare on every track,
And plod each desert's sands; his barks are moored
In every haven—this Al Hafi's self
Hath often told me; adding with delight
How grandly and how nobly this his friend
Employs the wealth he doth not scorn to win
With such sagacity and diligence;
How free his soul from every prejudice;
To virtue how accessible his heart,
And how in harmony with all that's fair.

SALADIN.

And yet he spoke so doubtfully but now,
So coldly of him.

SITTAH.

No, not coldly, yet
He seemed in doubt, as if he ventured not
To praise him overmuch, yet had no mind
To blame him overmuch without a cause.
Can it be possible that e'en the best
Of all his race is powerless to shun

The foibles of his race; and that, for this,
Al Hafi truly had to blush for him?
Howe'er it be, whether he's more than Jew
Or less, he's rich; and that's enough for us.

SALADIN.

But, sister, sure you would not take his wealth
By downright force?

SITTAH.

What mean you, then, by force?
By fire and sword, belike? Oh no, not that.
What force, forsooth, is needful with the weak
Save their own weakness? But now come with me
To my own private chamber; there you'll hear
A songstress whom I purchased yesterday;
Meanwhile a scheme may ripen in my brain
I've planned for working on this Nathan—come.

SCENE IV.—*In front of NATHAN'S house, adjoining the
grove of palm trees. NATHAN and RECHA issuing from
the house. DAYA, later, meeting them.*

RECHA.

Oh father, you have tarried long—I fear
That you'll no longer find him there.

NATHAN.

Well, well,
If he's no longer there beneath the palms,

We'll find him somewhere else—be calm,—see there,
Is that not Daya coming to us?

RECHA.

Ay,
I fear she must have lost him quite.

NATHAN.

Oh no,
Not quite.

RECHA.

If not, she would not come so slow.

NATHAN.

She has not seen us yet.

RECHA.

But now she does.

NATHAN.

And doubles now her speed—see, see—be calm;
I pray you to be calm.

RECHA.

What! would you wish
To have a daughter capable of calm
In such a case—regardless of the lot
Of him who saved a life that's dear to her
Only because she owed it first to you?

NATHAN.

I would not have you other than you are,
E'en if I knew that now your soul was stirred
By feelings of another kind.

RECHA.

What kind?

What mean you, father?

NATHAN.

Need you ask of me?

So coyly too—so timidly of me?
Whatever may be passing in your breast
Is Nature's blameless working—never fear;
E'en as I fear not—only promise me,
If e'er your heart should speak in plainer tones,
You will not hide from me the lightest wish
That it may form.

RECHA.

I tremble at the thought
That e'er my heart could shroud itself from you.

NATHAN.

No more of this—'tis settled once for all——
But here comes Daya—well, what news of him?

DAYA.

He still is pacing underneath the palms,
And soon he'll pass beside yon wall—see there,
He's coming now.

RECHA.

He seems irresolute
Whether to go straight on, or back again;
To right or left.

DAYA.

No, no, he sometimes goes
Round by the cloister—seldom, it is true,
But if he does, he then must pass this way;
What will you wager on't?

RECHA.

You're right, you're right!
But did you speak with him, and what's his mood?

DAYA.

Just as it ever is.

NATHAN.

Then have a care
Lest he perceive you—step a little back;
Or, better still, return, and go within.

RECHA.

Oh for another look—plague on that copse
Which robs me of him now!

DAYA.

Come, come,
Your father's right; if he should see you here,
The chances are he'll disappear at once.

RECHA.

That odious, odious copse!

NATHAN.

If suddenly
He should emerge from it, he cannot fail
To see you where you stand, so go at once;
I pray you to begone.

DAYA.

Come, come, I know
A lattice whence we'll see them.

RECHA.

Be it so.

(RECHA and DAYA return to the house.)

SCENE V.—NATHAN, and presently the TEMPLAR.

NATHAN.

I almost shrink from this eccentric boy;
His rugged virtues well-nigh make me start.
Strange that one man should have the subtle power
To move and agitate another thus!
Ha! here he comes—by Heaven, he is indeed
A manly youngster—ay, I like him well,
His bold defiant look, his jaunty step;
What though the shell be rough, the kernel, sure,
Will not be that—I've somewhere seen his like.
(To the TEMPLAR.)
Forgive me, noble Frank.

TEMPLAR.

For what?

NATHAN.

I pray——

TEMPLAR.

What, Jew?

NATHAN.

For licence to accost you, sir.

TEMPLAR.

Can I prevent it?—well, at least be brief.

NATHAN.

Oh stay; oh hasten not so proudly on;
Oh pass not with such lofty scorn a man
Whom you have made your debtor evermore!

TEMPLAR.

How so?—Ah, now I guess—belike you are——

NATHAN.

Nathan's my name—I'm father of the maid
Your reckless courage rescued from the flames;
I come to——

TEMPLAR.

If to thank me, pray forbear;
I've had to bear too great a load of thanks
Already for this trifle—and besides

You owe me nothing. Think you that I knew
The maid you speak of was a child of yours?
A Templar's duty is to render help
To every fellow-creature in distress.
Moreover, when I did the deed, my life
Was but a burden to me, and I seized,
I gladly seized, the opportunity
To risk it for another, even though
'Twere but a Jewish girl.

NATHAN.

'Tis grandly said;
Grand, yet forbidding!—still, I comprehend
The turn you give it—modest heroism
Takes refuge oft behind forbidding forms
To shun our admiration. If you spurn
The tribute of my thanks, what other meed
Would you scorn less?—Sir knight, if you were not
A stranger and a captive in our midst,
I would not speak so boldly—yet command
In what I now can serve you.

TEMPLAR.

You?—in nought.

NATHAN.

I'm rich.

TEMPLAR.

The richer Jew to me was ne'er
The better Jew.

NATHAN.

Yet haply could you not,
In spite of that, bethink you of a use
For what of good he has?—I mean his wealth.

TEMPLAR.

Well, were it only for my mantle's sake
I will not quite decline your proffered help;
As soon as it is wholly gone to rags,
When neither stitch nor patch shall serve its turn,
I'll come and borrow of you stuff or cash
To make another—nay, look not at once
So black about it—for the nonce you're safe;
The matter has not come to that as yet;
You see 'tis still in tolerable case;
Only this corner of it, as you see,
Displays an ugly mark, for it was singed;
And that befell it as I bore your girl
From out the flames.

NATHAN (*taking in his hand the singed corner of the
TEMPLAR'S mantle, and contemplating it*).

Alack, 'tis passing strange
That this grim spot, this brand-mark of the fire,
Should speak a better witness for the man
Than his own lips!—I fain would kiss it, sir,
This spot. Ah, pardon me—I meant it not.
(*A tear falls from his eye on the knight's mantle.*)

TEMPLAR.

What meant you not?

NATHAN.

To shed this tear on it.

TEMPLAR.

It matters not—'tis but a drop the more.

(Aside.)

Methinks this Jew begins to puzzle me.

NATHAN.

Permit me for a moment, sir, to take
Your mantle to my daughter.

TEMPLAR.

Wherefore that?

NATHAN.

That she may press her lips upon this spot,
Since now it is in vain for her to hope
To clasp your knees.

TEMPLAR.

Jew, Jew!—or if your name
Be Nathan, well then, Nathan, I protest
You fit your words with wondrous force and point;
I know not what to say. Perhaps, perhaps——

NATHAN.

Feign and disguise your motives as you will,
I see you through—you were too generous,
Too good, to be more courtly than you were;
A melting maiden, an ambassadress

Too pressing, and a father far away ;
Ay, you were careful of her fair good name ;
You shunned to try her—fled from victory—
For this, too, I would thank you.

TEMPLAR.

Well, I own
You know at least how Templars ought to feel.

NATHAN.

What !—Templars only—ay, and only ought
Because their Order's rules prescribe it so ?
I know how good men think, and well I know
That good men are produced in every land.

TEMPLAR.

Yet with a difference, I hope ?

NATHAN.

Just so,
A difference of colour, form, and dress.

TEMPLAR.

And number, too, perhaps, in various lands ?

NATHAN.

Such small distinctions are of little weight ;
The great man everywhere needs elbow-room ,
Too many, planted in too strait a space,
Resemble trees which bruise each other's boughs ;
The middling good, like us, are found in crowds ;
But each must dwell in charity with all ;

The knot must not look down upon the gnarl;¹
Nor let the topmost twig presume to think
That it alone sprang not from mother earth.

TEMPLAR.

'Tis said right well—yet you must know the folk
Which slandered first of all their fellow-men;
Know you not, Nathan, who the people are
Who first pronounced themselves “The Chosen
Race”?

How if I hated not that race indeed,
And yet could not refrain from scorning them
For arrogance like this, bequeathed by them
To Christian and Mussulman alike,
Who too must boast *their* God alone as true.
You start to hear a Templar speak like this;
A Christian and a Templar; but I ask
When, ay and where, has this fond dream of theirs
That they alone possess the one true God;
This pious rage to force on all the world
This better God of theirs as best of all;
Where has it shown itself in blacker form
Than here, and now²—since here and now the
scales
Still blind their eyes? However, let it be;
Let him be blind who will. Forget my words,
And let me go.

NATHAN.

Good youth, you do not know
How much more close I now must cling to you;

¹ See Note 25.² See Note 26.

We must be friends, we must,—despise my race
As much as e'er you please—we did not choose
Our races for ourselves. Do you and I
Make up our races?—what is race forsooth?—
Are Jews and Christians Christians and Jews
Rather than *men*?—oh, if I've found in you
One more for whom it is enough to be
A *MAN*!

TEMPLAR.

Ay, Nathan, that you have, by Heaven;
You have indeed!—your hand!—I blush to think
That for a moment I misjudged you thus.

NATHAN.

And I am proud of it—for common souls
Are seldom thus misjudged.

TEMPLAR.

Uncommon ones
Can hardly be forgot. Ay, Nathan, ay,
We *must* be friends.

NATHAN.

We are already that.
Oh, how my Recha will be gladdened now,
And what a bright perspective opens up
Before my eyes! Oh, if you knew her, sir!

TEMPLAR.

I burn to do so. But see there—who's this
Bursts from your house? It is your Daya, sure.

NATHAN.

'Tis she—and agitated too!

TEMPLAR.

God grant
That nought has happened to our Recha now.

SCENE VI.—DAYA *in haste to the Preceding.*

DAYA.

Oh Nathan, Nathan!

NATHAN.

Well, what scares you thus?

DAYA.

Oh pardon me, my noble knight, if now
I interrupt you.

NATHAN.

What's the matter? Speak.

DAYA.

The Sultan sends for you—the Sultan seeks
To speak with you—the Sultan—oh my God!

NATHAN.

With me!—the Sultan!—possibly he wants
To view the wares I've brought; he must be told
That few or none have been unpacked as yet.

DAYA.

No, no—he would view nought; he only wants
To speak with you, as soon as e'er you can.

NATHAN.

Well then, I'll go to him—and go you home.

DAYA.

Worshipful knight, excuse us, I entreat;
My God! we are so anxious as to what
The Sultan wants!

NATHAN.

We'll know it soon enough.

(DAYA goes.)

SCENE VII.—NATHAN *and the* TEMPLAR

TEMPLAR.

And so you know him not as yet; I mean
In person.

NATHAN.

Who?—the Sultan—no, not yet.
I have not shunned him; neither have I sought
To see him; for the universal voice
Spoke things of him I gladly took on trust;
And even if he equals not his fame,
Yet, by the sparing of your life—

TEMPLAR.

Ay, true,

I never can forget the life I live
Is but a gift from him.

NATHAN.

Through which he gave
A double, nay a treble life to me.
'This alters all between us—this alone
Has bound me to his service with a cord
I ne'er can snap. I'm all anxiety
To know his wishes. I'm prepared for all;
Ay, I am e'en prepared to own to him
'Tis for your sake that I am thus prepared.

TEMPLAR.

And I myself have never had a chance
To thank him, often as I've crossed his path.
'Twould seem the impression that I made on him
Has died away as quickly as it rose.
Belike he now remembers me no more;
And yet he must one day remember me,
If it be only to decide my fate.
'Tis not sufficient that at his command,
And at his pleasure, I am living still;
I've yet to learn according to whose will
I must in future shape the life he gave.

NATHAN.

Just so—then let me hasten to him now.
Who knows—perhaps he may let fall a word
That may permit me to allude to you.

Pardon my haste—I may not tarry more.
When will you come to us?

TEMPLAR.

Whene'er I may.

NATHAN.

And that's whene'er you will.

TEMPLAR.

Well then, to-day.

NATHAN.

And, if I may presume to ask, your name?

TEMPLAR.

It was—well—it is Curd von Stauffen—Curd——

NATHAN.

Von Stauffen?—Stauffen?—Stauffen?

TEMPLAR.

Surprise you so?

Why does this

NATHAN.

Von Stauffen? I presume
That many bear the name.

TEMPLAR.

Oh yes—or did;
Here rot the bones of many of the race;

My uncle's self—or father, I should say—
But wherefore do you ever scan me thus,
More and more keenly?

NATHAN.

Oh, 'tis nothing—nought.
Can I e'er weary of beholding you?

TEMPLAR.

Then I will leave you now—the gazer's eye
Full oft sees more than e'er it thought to see;
Trust it not, Nathan; no, leave it to time,
Not curiosity, to make us known. *(He goes.)*

NATHAN *(looking after him with astonishment)*.

'The gazer's eye,' he said, 'full oft sees more
'Than e'er it thought to see.' It seems as if
He read my soul—and yet it well might be—
Wolf's stature, and his step, his very voice.
'Twas thus Wolf ever used to toss his head;
Just so Wolf bore his sword across his arm;
Just so he held his hand to shade his eyes,
As if to veil the lightning of his glance.
How these deep-graven memories at times
Appear to slumber in our minds until
A word, a tone, awakes them! Can it be?
Von Stauffen!—ay, Filneck and Stauffen—right!
Soon will I look more closely into this.
Meanwhile, to Saladin. But, by my word,
Daya's been listening! Ho, Daya, here!

SCENE VIII.—NATHAN *and* DAYA.

NATHAN.

I'll wager now the hearts of both of you
Are burning to discover something else
Than what the Sultan has to say to me.

DAYA.

And can you blame her? You had just begun
To parley with him on more friendly terms
When Saladin's unlucky summons came
And scared us from the casement.

NATHAN.

Tell her, then,

That she at any moment may expect
A visit from him.

DAYA.

Positively so?

NATHAN.

Daya, I think I may rely on you.
Be on your guard, I pray; you shall not rue 't,
Even your Christian scruples may be stilled
By what may follow. Do not mar my plans.
Whate'er you say to her, whate'er you ask,
Be prudent and reserved.

DAYA.

I scarcely need

Advice like this. I go; and go yourself;

For see, I do believe the Sultan sends
A second messenger to fetch you now;
Your Dervish, your Al Hafi, comes this way.

SCENE IX.—NATHAN *and* AL HAFI.

AL HAFI.

Ha! I was making for you even now.

NATHAN.

Is it so pressing then, what can he wish
Of me?

AL HAFI.

Who?

NATHAN.

Saladin—I'm going now.

AL HAFI.

To whom? to Saladin?

NATHAN.

Is it not he

Who sent you?

AL HAFI.

What? Sent *me*—oh, not at all.
So it appears that he *has* sent for you.

NATHAN.

Ay, that he has.

AL HAFI.

Well then, the mischief's done!

NATHAN.

What mischief, Hafi?

AL HAFI.

'Tis no fault of mine;
God knows it's not. What is there I've not said,
What lies not told of you, to stave it off!

NATHAN.

To stave off what? What mischief do you mean?

AL HAFI.

That now you must become his Treasurer.
I pity you, and will not stay to see 't;
I'll go this very hour—you well know where,
And know the way, too. Is there anything
That I can do for you where I am bound?
I'm at your service, only charge me not
With more than such a naked wretch as I
Can take along with me. I'm off at once;
Say quickly what's your will.

NATHAN.

Al Hafi, think;
Remember I'm completely in the dark;
What means this chatter?

AL HAFI.

I suppose you'll take
Your money-bags with you.

NATHAN.

My money-bags?

AL HAFI.

The gold you'll have to lend to Saladin.

NATHAN.

Is *that* the worst?

AL HAFI.

Should I look calmly on
While he from day to day shall scoop your chests,
And pluck you clean and bare from top to toe?
Should I look on while his extravagance
From prudent bounty's else unfailing stores
Shall borrow, borrow, borrow, till the mice,
The very mice, poor things, that dwell therein
Shall die of hunger? Do you haply think
That he who wants your gold's a likely man
To follow your advice?—*he* take advice!
When did our Saladin e'er take advice?
What think you, Nathan, I beheld him do
This very day?

NATHAN.

What, then?

AL HAFI.

I went to him
Just as he happened to be playing chess
With Sittah. Now, she plays a fairish hand;
Saladin thought that he had lost the game;
In fact he had already thrown it up.
The board was there—I gave it but a look,
And found the game was far from being lost——

NATHAN.

Ay, I'll be bound, a precious find for you!

AL HAFI.

He needed only to advance his king
Beside his pawn, to counteract her check—
Could I but show you now!

NATHAN.

I doubt it not.

AL HAFI.

And then the rook had held the field, and she
Had lost the game—so I explained the case;
And said to him—reflect!

NATHAN.

And he, belike,
Would not agree with you.

AL HAFI.

Agree, forsooth!
He would not even hear me; but in fume
Dashed down the chess-board!

NATHAN.

Is it possible?

AL HAFI.

And absolutely said he *chose* to lose!
Chose!—do you call that chess?

NATHAN.

Well, hardly so;

’Tis playing with the game.

AL HAFI.

And yet the stake

Was no mere nut-shell.

NATHAN.

Plague upon the stake;
That was the least of it—but to be deaf
To *your* advice—to shut his ears to you
On such a grave and weighty point as that;
Not to appreciate your eagle glance;
That cries aloud for vengeance—does it not?

AL HAFI.

Tut! can’t you see I only told the tale
That you might judge the sort of head he has.
In short, I can no longer bear with him;
Here I’ve been hunting up these greasy Moors,
To see if any will advance him gold.
I, who ne’er played the beggar for myself,
Must borrow now for him! Your borrowing
Is little better than your begging; while

To lend, at least to lend on usury,
Is little better than it is to steal.
Among my patrons on the Ganges' banks
I need do neither;¹ no, nor be a tool
For either purpose. Ay, on Ganges' banks,
By Ganges only, are there real men;
And you're the only one of all those here
Who's fit to dwell there. Come along with me;
Leave in the lurch at once your gold and him;
The glittering dross is all he wants of you;
He's sure to wring it from you in the end;
So, better make an end of it at once;
And I'll provide you with a pilgrim's frock.²
Come, come!

NATHAN.

Nay, Hafi, it appears to me
We can at any time fall back on this.
Meanwhile, have patience while I think it o'er.

AL HAFI.

What! think it o'er indeed! a thing like this
Requires no thinking o'er.

NATHAN.

Well, wait at least
Till I've returned from seeing Saladin,
And said good-bye.

AL HAFI.

The man who hesitates
Seeks only for excuses not to act;

¹ See Note 27.

² See Note 28.

And he who cannot instantly resolve
To live unto himself, remains for aye
The slave of others. Be it as you please.
Good-bye! my way is here, and yours is there.

NATHAN.

But, Hafi, I presume before you go
You'll have to square your treasury accounts.

AL HAFI.

Accounts, indeed! the balance in my chest
Is not worth counting; as for the accounts,
Sittah or you will surely vouch for them.
Good-bye. (*He goes.*)

NATHAN (*looking after him*).

I will, you rough but noble soul.
What shall I say?—your genuine beggar is,
When all is told, your only genuine king.
(*He goes in another direction.*)

ACT III.

SCENE I.—NATHAN'S *house*.RECHA *and* DAYA.

RECHA.

Daya, what was it that my father said;
That any moment I might look for him?
That sounds as if he would appear at once;
And yet how many have elapsed in vain!
But wherefore think upon the moments passed?
Let me live only for each coming one;
The one that brings him here must come at last.

DAYA.

Plague on the summons to the Sultan's court!
Nathan assuredly had but for this
Brought him at once.

RECHA.

And when the moment comes,
And when my warmest, my most heart-felt wish
Shall be fulfilled at last—what then?

DAYA.

What then?

Why, then I hope *my* warmest wish at last
Shall be fulfilled as well.

RECHA.

But, oh, my wish !
When 'tis accomplished, what shall take its place,
Or what succeed it in this wayward heart
Which now hath lost the very power to beat
Without some dominating wish ?—a void ?
I tremble at the thought !

DAYA.

Nay, mine shall then
Take up the place of yours—my yearning wish
That you should dwell in Europe, and with those
Who may be worthy of you.

RECHA.

Nay, you err ;
The very thing that makes you hug that wish
Prevents it from becoming ever mine.
Your native land attracts you to its shores,
And think you mine should have no charms for me ?
Or can the image of your far-off friends
Still lingering faintly in your memory,
Move you more vividly than I am moved
By those I daily see and touch and hear ;
My dear ones here ?

DAYA.

Nay, struggle as you will,
The ways of Heaven still are Heaven's ways ;
What if your rescuer should prove to be
The chosen instrument by whom his God,
Whose champion he is, hath fore-ordained
That you should be transported to the land

And to the race for whom 'tis manifest
Your birth intended you?

RECHA.

Oh, Daya, dear,
Must you still harp on idle prate like this?
Your head is haunted by the strangest whims.
His God, forsooth, whose champion he is!
Whose chattel, then, is God?—what sort of God
Is that a man can claim as his alone,
And needs a man to be his champion?
And how know we the special spot of earth
For which we're destined, if it be not that
On which we first drew breath?—fie, Daya, fie!
Father would frown to hear you talk like this.
What has he done to you that ever thus
You paint my happiness so far from him?
How has he wronged you, that you ever strive
To mingle *your* indigenous flowers or weeds
Amid pure reason's seeds so wisely sown
By him within my soul? Nay, Daya dear,
He would not gladly have your gaudy blooms
In my heart's soil; and I must tell you too,
However bravely they might clothe that soil,
They sap its essence and exhaust its force;
Their sickly odour makes my senses reel;
Your head is more accustomed to their fume;
I do not chide you for the stouter nerves
Which render it supportable to you;
It likes not me. Your precious angel, too;
How nearly had that folly turned my brain!
E'en now I blush to think upon the farce
Whene'er I meet my father.

DAYA.

Farce, forsooth !

As if all wisdom were confined to you.

Oh, if I dared to speak !

RECHA.

And dare you not ?

When, let me ask you, was I not all ear
When you extolled the heroes of your faith ?
When grudged I admiration of their deeds ;
Or when withheld the tribute of my tears
For all their sufferings ? Their creed, I own,
Ne'er struck me as their most heroic point ;
And then I drew more comfort from the thought
That true devotion to Almighty God
Hangs not upon the fancies we may hold
As to His nature or His attributes.
Oh, Daya dear, my father hath so oft
Expounded this to us ; and you yourself
So oft have owned the justice of his view,
Why do you seek to undermine the faith
Which you yourself have aided him to build ?
But, Daya, this is surely not a theme
With which most fitly to await our friend.
And yet—for me it may be ; since for me
How much depends on whether he, too— Hark !
Hark, Daya, comes not some one to the door ?
Oh, if it should be he !

SCENE II.—RECHA, DAYA, and the TEMPLAR.

AN ATTENDANT (*ushering in the TEMPLAR*).

This way, sir knight.

RECHA.

'Tis he—my rescuer!

(*Profoundly agitated, she seems about to fall at the TEMPLAR'S feet.*)

TEMPLAR.

But for the wish
To shun this scene, I had appeared ere now.

RECHA.

My wish is, at the feet of this proud man,
To thank my God alone—and not the man.
The man desires no thanks; ay, no more thanks
Than does the water jar which in his hands
Was busied in extinguishing the flames,
Passively filled and emptied passively,
With ne'er a thought of me. Just so the man.
Blind chance alone impelled him 'mid the flames;
Blind chance it was which cast me in his arms;
And there I lay by sheer mechanic chance,
As any spark upon his mantle might,
Until some other chance expelled us both
From out the fire. What is there here for thanks?
In Europe often wine impels a man
To stranger things than this; and Templars, sure,
Are bound to do no less—ay, sure they're bound,
Like somewhat better educated dogs,
To pluck alike from water and from fire.

TEMPLAR (*who has heard her words with wonder and emotion*).

Oh, Daya, Daya, if, in tortured hours
Of care and choler, my ungracious mood
May have incensed you, why retail to her
Each hasty word that then escaped my lips?
That, Daya, was too spiteful a revenge;
Yet if in future you'll interpret me
To her in kinder terms——

DAYA.

Methinks, sir knight,
The little stabs you levelled at her heart
Have wrought therein but little harm to you.

RECHA.

But can it be you've been a prey to care,
And yet have been more chary of your grief
Than of your life!

TEMPLAR.

My gentle, kindly child!
Oh, how my ravished soul is now possessed
By eye and ear! This never was the maid,
Oh no, it cannot be the maid I snatched
From out the fire; for who could have beheld
A maiden such as this, and failed to snatch
Her witching form from out the fieriest fire?
Who could have hesitated? but in sooth
She was disguised, distorted by affright.

(*He pauses, rapt in admiration of her.*)

RECHA.

And yet I find you just the same as then.

(She pauses, then resumes, to interrupt his reverie.)

Now say, sir knight, where you have been so long;
And I might even ask—where are you now?

TEMPLAR.

I am, perhaps, where I ought not to be.

RECHA.

And been, perhaps, where you should not have been;
This is not well.

TEMPLAR.

I've been upon the mount;
Mount—Sinai, is it? Ay, men call it so.

RECHA.

On Sinai, have you? I am glad of that,
For now I may discover for a fact
Whether 'tis true that—— *(She hesitates.)*

TEMPLAR.

Whether what is true?
That there the very spot may yet be seen
Where Moses stood in presence of his God?

RECHA.

Oh no, not that; since wheresoe'er he stood,
He *must* have stood in presence of his God;

Of that I'm sure. I only wished to know
Whether 'tis true that to ascend that mount
Is far less toilsome than descent from it;
For look, with all the hills that e'er I've climbed
'Twas just the opposite. But how, sir knight,
You turn away, and will not look on me.

TEMPLAR.

Because I'd rather hear you.

RECHA.

Nay, methinks
It is because you fain would hide from me
Your scorn of my simplicity. You smile
Because I have not asked you weightier things
Regarding that most holy hill of hills;
Is it not so?

TEMPLAR.

In that case I must now
Again look in your eyes. Why cast them down,
Or why suppress your smile? Why seek to hide
That which I fain would read within your looks,
That which your fitful features speak so plain?¹
Ah, Recha, Recha, well did Nathan say,
'Oh, if you knew her!'

RECHA.

Who said that to you,
And in respect of whom?

¹ See Note 29.

TEMPLAR.

Your father did;
 'Oh, if you knew her,' were the words he said,
 And said of you.

DAYA.

Have I not said it too,
And many a time?

TEMPLAR.

But tell me where he is;
Where is your father? Closeted as yet
With Saladin?

RECHA.

He must be.

TEMPLAR.

What! still there?
Oh, I forgot. No, no, he can't be there;
He surely must be waiting for me now
Down there beside the cloister. Ay, 'twas so
'That we arranged together—pardon me,
I go to fetch him.

DAYA.

Nay, leave that to me;
Stay here, sir knight; I'll fetch him here at once.

TEMPLAR.

Not so, not so; he yonder looks for me,
And not for you. Besides, it well might be—

Who knows?—it well might chance, with Saladin—
You do not know the Sultan—possibly
He's met with trouble; trust me, there is risk.
Should I not hasten to him?

RECHA.

Risk! what risk?

TEMPLAR.

Danger for him, for you, for me, unless
I quickly go to him. (*He goes.*)

SCENE III.—RECHA *and* DAYA.

RECHA.

Daya, what *can* it mean?
So sudden—so abrupt! What drives him hence?

DAYA.

E'en let him go. Methinks 'tis no bad sign.

RECHA.

A sign?—of what?

DAYA.

That something works within;
Boils in his blood—yet must not over-boil.
E'en let him be—I think 'tis now *your* turn.

RECHA.

My turn? Why, Daya, you become, like him,
A riddle to me.

DAYA.

Well, I mean that soon
It may be in your power to pay him back
For all the suffering he caused to you;
But be not too revengeful, too severe.

RECHA.

You best can tell the meaning of your words.

DAYA.

But tell me, is your calm restored at last?

RECHA.

Ay, that it is, thank Heaven.

DAYA.

And now confess
His want of calm rejoices you in turn,
And that you owe the calm you now enjoy
To his unrest.

RECHA.

If so, I know it not;
The most I'm able to confess to you
Is that it fills me with astonishment
How such a sudden tempest in my breast
Should be succeeded by this sudden calm.¹
His look, his speech, his every gesture seem
To have—to have——

DAYA.

Appeased your hunger?

¹ See Note 30.

RECHA.

No;

I will not say appeased it; far from that.

DAYA.

Well, dulled the edge of it at least.

RECHA.

Perhaps;

Since you will have it so.

DAYA.

Oh no, not I.

RECHA.

To me he must be ever dear,—more dear
Than life itself, though haply now my pulse
Flutters no longer at his very name,
And though the lightest thought of him has ceased
To stir my bosom with a swifter throb—
But wherefore chatter thus? Come, Daya, come,
Let us once more unto the lattice hie
That looks toward the palms.


DAYA.

So then, it seems,

The craving hunger's not yet quite appeased.

RECHA.

Nay, now I'll see the palms themselves once more;
Not merely him beneath them.



NATHAN.

The people?—possibly.

SALADIN.

Do you suppose
I think so lightly of the people's voice?
Long have I wished to look upon the man
They call the Wise.

NATHAN.

What if they called him that
Only in jest; and what if wise to them
Meant only shrewd—the shrewd man only he
Who rightly knows wherein his profit lies?

SALADIN.

You mean his truest profit, I presume?

NATHAN.

Then the most selfish were the shrewdest man;
Then wise and shrewd would mean the self-same thing.

SALADIN.

You're preaching what your practice contradicts.
Man's truest interests, which lie concealed
From vulgar souls, are not concealed from you;
Or, at the least, you've tried to find them out;
Have pondered over them, and this alone
Proves you are wise.

NATHAN.

Which all men think they are.

SALADIN.

A truce to modesty—'tis ever apt
To nauseate a man who only seeks
To hear a word of downright common sense.

(Springing up.)

Come, let us to the point—but mark me, Jew,
Be frank—be only frank!

NATHAN.

Sultan, be sure
That I shall serve you so as to be held
Worthy of further custom at your hands.

SALADIN.

How would you serve me?

NATHAN.

You shall have the best
Of all I have, and at the fairest price.

SALADIN.

Whatever do you talk of? Surely not
About your wares—my sister possibly
May chaffer with you. *(Aside.)* This for Sittah's ear,
In case she's listening behind the door—

(Continuing to NATHAN.)

But with the trader I have nought to do.

NATHAN.

Then, Sultan, doubtless you would wish to learn
If in my wanderings I've noted aught

Touching the plans or movements of your foes,
Who without doubt are stirring once again,
If I may frankly speak.

SALADIN.

Nor yet is this
My purpose with you. I already know
All that I need of this.

NATHAN.

Then, sire, command.

SALADIN.

I want your teaching as to something else ;
Something far different—and since it seems
You are so wise, now tell me, I entreat,
What human faith, what theologic law,
Hath struck you as the truest and the best ?

NATHAN.

Sire, I'm a Jew.

SALADIN.

And I a Mussulman ;
And here we have the Christians to boot ;
Of these three faiths one only can be true ;
A man like you would never take his stand
Where chance or birth has cast him ; or, if so,
'Tis from conviction, reasonable grounds,
And choice of that which is the best,—well, then,
Tell me your view, and let me hear your grounds,
For I myself have ever lacked the time

To rack my brains about it. Let me know
The reasons upon which you found your faith—
In confidence, of course—that I may make
That faith my own. How, Nathan, do you start,
And prove me with your eye?—it well may be
No Sultan e'er before had such a whim;
And yet it seems not utterly beneath
Even a Sultan's notice. Speak then, speak;
Or haply you would wish a little space
To think it over—well, I give it you.—

(*Aside.*)

I'd like to know if Sittah's listening now;
I'll go and see; I fain would hear from her
How I have played my part.—Now, Nathan, think,
Think quickly on it—I'll be back anon.

(*He goes into the adjoining chamber, whither
SITTAH had previously gone.*)

•

SCENE VI.—NATHAN *alone.*

'Tis strange, 'tis marvellous! what can it mean?
What can he want? I thought he wanted gold,
And now it seems that what he wants is *Truth!*
And wants it, too, as prompt and plump as if
Truth were a minted coin—nay, if he sought
Some obsolete coinage valued but by weight;
That might have passed. But such a brand-new
coin,
Vouched by the stamp and current upon change!
No—truth indeed is not a thing like that.
Can it be hoarded in the head of man

Like gold in bags? Nay, which is here the Jew,
He or myself? And yet, might he not well
In truth have sought the truth? But then, the
thought,
The mere suspicion, that he put the case
But as a snare for me! That were *too* small!—
Too small? Nay, what's too petty for the great?
He blurted out the theme so bluntly too;
Your friendly visitor is wont to knock
And give you warning ere he beats you up.
I must be on my guard. How best be that?
I cannot play the downright bigot Jew,
Nor may I wholly cast my Jewish slough,
For if I'm not the Jew, he then might ask
Why not a Mussulman?—I have it now!
Ay, this may serve me—idle tales amuse
Not children only—well, now let him come.

SCENE VII.—SALADIN *and* NATHAN.

SALADIN (*to himself*).

And so the coast was clear.

(*To* NATHAN.)

I trust I've come
Not too soon back; I hope you've ended now
Your meditation—tell me the result;
There's none to hear us.

NATHAN.

Would that all the world
Might hear our colloquy!

SALADIN.

Is Nathan then
So certain of his point? Ha! that I call
A wise man truly—ne'er to blink the truth,
To hazard everything in quest of it;
Body and soul itself, and goods and life.

NATHAN.

Ay, when 'tis needful, or can profit us.

SALADIN.

Henceforth I'll hope to have a right to bear
One of the many names by which I'm dubbed,
"Reformer of the World and of the Law."

NATHAN.

In sooth it is a fair and goodly name;
But, Sultan, ere I tell you all my thought,
Let me relate to you a little tale.

SALADIN.

Why not? I've ever had a love for tales
When well narrated.

NATHAN.

Ah, the telling well,
That scarcely is my forte.

SALADIN.

Again your pride,
Aping humility—tell on, tell on.

NATHAN.

Well then:—¹ In hoar antiquity there dwelt
In eastern lands a man who had received
From a loved hand a ring of priceless worth.
An opal was the stone it bore, which shot
A hundred fair and varied hues around,
And had the mystic power to render dear
Alike to God and man whoever wore
The ring with perfect faith. What wonder, then,
That eastern man would never lay it off,
And further made a fixed and firm resolve
That it should bide for ever with his race.
For this he left it to his dearest son,
Adding a stringent clause that he in turn
Should leave it to the son he loved the most,
And that in every age the dearest son,
Without respect to seniority,
By virtue of the ring alone should be
The lord of all the race. Sultan, I ask
If you have marked me well.

SALADIN.

Ay, ay,—proceed.

NATHAN.

And thus the ring came down from sire to son,
Until it reached a father of three sons
Each equally obedient to his will,
And whom accordingly he was constrained
To love alike. And yet from time to time;
Whene'er the one or other chanced to be

¹ See Note 31.

Alone with him, and his o'erflowing heart
Was not divided by the other two,
The one who stood beside him still would seem
Most worthy of the ring; and thus it chanced
That he by kindly weakness had been led
To promise it in turn to each of them.
This state of matters lasted while it could,
But by-and-by he had to think of death,
And then this worthy sire was sore perplexed.
He could not brook the thought of breaking faith
With two dear sons to whom he'd pledged his word;
What now was to be done? He straightway sends
In secret for a skilled artificer,
And charges him to make two other rings
Precisely like the first, at any cost.
This the artificer contrives to do,
And when at last he brings him all three rings
Even the father can't say which is which.
With joyful heart he summons then his sons,
But singly and apart, bestows on each
His special blessing, and his ring—and dies.
You hear me, Sultan?

SALADIN (*looking aside in perplexity*).

Ay, I hear, I hear;
Come, make an end of it.

NATHAN.

I'm at the end;
For what's to follow may be well conceived.
Scarce was the father dead, each several son
Comes with his ring and claims to be the lord

Of all his kindred. They investigate,
Recriminate, and wrangle—all in vain—
Which was the true original genuine ring
Was undemonstrable——

*(After a pause, during which he closely marks
the SULTAN.)*

Almost as much
As now by us is undemonstrable
The one true faith.

SALADIN.

Nathan, is this to pass
For answer to my question?

NATHAN.

Sultan, no;
'Tis only meant to serve as my excuse
For better answer. How could I presume
E'er to pronounce distinction 'tween the rings
The father purposely designed to be
Quite indistinguishable?

SALADIN.

Rings, forsooth!
Trifle not with me thus. I should have thought
The three religions which I named to you
Were easy to distinguish, if alone
By difference of dress and food and drink.

NATHAN.

But not by fundamental difference.
Are they not founded all on history,

Traditional or written? History
Must still be taken upon trust alone;
And who are they who best may claim our trust?
Surely our people, of whose blood we are;
Who from our infancy have proved their love,
And never have deceived us, save, perchance,
When kindly guile was wholesomer for us
Than truth itself. Why should I less rely
Upon my ancestors than you on yours;
Or can I ask of you to give the lie
To your forefathers, merely to agree
With mine?—and all that I have said applies
To Christians as well. Is this not so?

SALADIN (*aside*).

Now, by the living God, the man is right;
I must be silent.

NATHAN.

Let us now return
Once more unto our rings. As I have said,
The sons now sued each other; each of them
Swore to the judge he had received his ring
Straight from his father's hand—as was the fact—
And that, too, after he had long enjoyed
His father's promise to bequeath the ring
To him alone—which also was the truth;
Each vowed the father never could have proved
So false to him; and rather than believe
A thing like this of such a loving sire,
He was constrained—however loath he was
To think unkindly of his brethren—

To charge them both with some nefarious trick,
And now he would unmask their treachery
And be avenged for such a cruel wrong.

SALADIN.

Well, and the Judge? for I am fain to hear
What you will make *him* say,—tell on, tell on.

NATHAN.

The Judge pronounced—Unless you bring your sire,
And place him here before the judgment-seat,
I must dismiss your suit. Think you I'm here
For solving riddles?—or perhaps you wait
Until the genuine ring declares itself.
Yet stay—you said the genuine ring contains
The magic power to make its wearer loved
More than all else, in sight of God and man;
This must decide the case—the spurious rings
Will not do this—say, which of you is he
The other two most love?—what, no reply?
Your rings would seem to work reflexively,
Not on external objects; since it seems
Each is enamoured of himself alone.
Oh, then, all three of you have been deceived,
And are deceivers too; and all three rings
Are spurious alike—the genuine ring
Was lost, most likely, and to hide its loss,
And to supply its place, your father caused
These three to be made up instead of it.

SALADIN.

Bravo! bravo!

NATHAN.

And then the Judge resumed—
Belike ye would not relish my advice
More than the judgment I have now pronounced ;
In that case, go—but my advice is this :
Accept the case precisely as it stands ;
If each of you in truth received his ring
Straight from his father's hand, let each believe
His own to be the true and genuine ring.
Perhaps your father wished to terminate
The tyranny of that especial ring
'Mid his posterity. Of this be sure,
He loved you all, and loved you all alike,
Since he was loath to injure two of you
That he might favour one alone ; well, then,
Let each now rival his unbiassed love,
His love so free from every prejudice ;
Vie with each other in the generous strife
To prove the virtues of the rings you wear ;
And to this end let mild humility,
Hearty forbearance, true benevolence,
And resignation to the will of God,
Come to your aid,—and if, in distant times,
The virtues of the genuine gem be found
Amid your children's children, they shall then,
When many a thousand years have rolled away,
Be called once more before this judgment-seat,
Whereon a wiser man than I shall sit
And give his verdict—now, begone. Thus spake
That sapient Judge.

SALADIN.

My God !

NATHAN.

Oh, Saladin,
Could you but be that wiser promised man!

SALADIN (*stepping forward and grasping NATHAN'S hand*).

Dust that I am and nothingness!—oh, no,
Oh, no!

NATHAN.

What ails thee, Sultan?

SALADIN.

Nathan, no;
The thousand thousand years of that wise Judge
Are not yet passed; nor is his judgment-seat
For Saladin,—now go—but be my friend.

NATHAN.

And had the Sultan nought but this to say?

SALADIN.

Nothing.

NATHAN.

What?—nothing?

SALADIN.

Nought—why do you ask?

NATHAN.

I fain had hoped occasion to prefer
A prayer to you.

SALADIN.

Occasion?—out with it.

NATHAN.

E'en now I'm come from off a distant round
In which I have recovered many a debt,
And now I've almost too much ready cash;
The times are growing critical again,
And scarce I know where to bestow my gear;
So I bethought me you might possibly—
Since war, when at the door, needs store of gold—
I thought that peradventure you might use
A part of mine.

SALADIN (*scanning him keenly*).

Nathan, I will not ask
Whether Al Hafi has been at your ear,
Or whether some suspicion of your own
Hath led you of your own accord to make
This offer to me.

NATHAN.

Some suspicion, sire?

SALADIN.

I well deserve it. Nathan, pardon me—
What boots concealment? I confess that now
I was upon the point——

NATHAN.

To ask, I trust,
This very thing of me.

SALADIN.

Just so.

NATHAN.

Well then,

We now shall both be suited equally;
But if I do not send you all my gold,
The youthful Templar is the cause of this;
Methinks you know him. I have yet to pay
A heavy debt to him.

SALADIN.

The Templar!—what,
You surely would not prop my deadliest foes;
You never would assist them with your gold?

NATHAN.

I speak of this one only—he whose life
You spared.

SALADIN.

What's this you now remind me of?
Ay, I had utterly forgot the youth;
You know him, Nathan? Say, where is he now?

NATHAN.

Know you not how your clemency to him
Hath flowed through him in blessing to myself,
And how he risked his newly-granted life
To save my darling daughter from the flames?

SALADIN.

Ha ! did he so ?—he looked like one who would ;
That truly had my Assad also done,
Whom he resembles so. Is he still here ?
If so, then bring him straight. I've told so much
Unto my sister of that brother dear
Whom she ne'er knew, that I must let her see
His very counterfeit—ay, bring him here,
And quickly. See how out of one good deed,
Though 'twas begotten of a moment's whim,
How many other goodly deeds may flow !
Go, bring him.

NATHAN.

That I will—our other pact
Holds good between us ? (He goes.)

SALADIN.

Ah, I now regret
I did not let my sister hear our talk.
Let me to her at once ; though hardly now
Can I repeat the half of all that's passed.
(He goes.)

SCENE VIII.—*Under the palm-trees, and near the cloister,
where the TEMPLAR is awaiting NATHAN.*

TEMPLAR *(in vehement conflict with himself)*.

Here stands the panting quarry run to earth—
'Tis well ; I would not now more closely probe
What's passing in me, nor essay to guess
What yet may pass. Enough, it is in vain

That I have fled—and yet I could do nought
But seek to flee—now come whate'er may come!
The stroke o'ertook me all too suddenly
For me to shun it, though I struggled hard;
And now I've been constrained to look on her
Whom I so long refrained to look upon—
To look on her!—and then the fixed resolve
Never again to lose her from my sight!
What is resolve, if barren of result?
And I have only suffered passively.
To see her, and to feel myself inwove
In all her being, was a thing of course.
To live apart from her's unthinkable;
'Twould be my death, and wheresoe'er we go
After we die, e'en there 'twould be my death.
Is this then love?—and does a Templar love?
A Christian love a Jewish maid in sooth?
What doth it matter?—in the Promised Land,
Land therefore ever to be praised by me,¹
I've laid aside full many a prejudice.
What of my Order? Nay, as Templar I
Am dead—was from that moment dead to it
Which made me prisoner to Saladin.
This very head which Saladin hath spared,
Is it the self-same head I used to wear?
No, 'tis a new one, which knows nought of all
That once was babbled to my former one,
And bound me once; and 'tis a better one,
More fitted for my father's native skies;²
Ay, *that* I feel—now only I begin
To think as once my father must have thought,
Unless they've told me fables touching him—

¹ See Note 32.² See Note 33.

Fables perhaps, yet credible enough,
Which ne'er appeared more credible to me
Than now, when I would seem to run the risk
Of stumbling where he fell; and if he fell,
Better to fall with men than stand with boys.
His own example guarantees to me
His approbation; and what living man's
Concerns me else? What, Nathan's? Nay, from him
I well may reckon on encouragement,
Not cold approval only. What a Jew!
Who yet affects to be no more than Jew.
He comes, in haste, and glows with radiant joy;
Who e'er came otherwise from Saladin?
Ho! Nathan, ho!

SCENE IX.—NATHAN *and the* TEMPLAR.

NATHAN.

Ha! is it you, sir knight?

TEMPLAR.

You've tarried with the Sultan very long.

NATHAN.

Nay, not so very long; in going there
I was delayed. Ah, truly, Curd, the man
Equals his reputation; nay, his fame
Is but the pale reflexion of himself.
But first and foremost let me say at once
The Sultan wills——

TEMPLAR.

Wills what?

NATHAN.

To speak with you;

Wills that you go to him without delay;
First come with me a moment to my house,
Where I have somewhat to arrange for him;
And then to Saladin.

TEMPLAR.

Nathan, your house
I ne'er again will enter till——

NATHAN.

What's this?

So you've been there already; ay, and seen
And spoken to her. Well, come, tell me all;
How like you Recha?

TEMPLAR.

More than words could say.
But see her again,—nay, that I'll never do;
Never, unless you promise on the spot
That I may ever ever look on her.

NATHAN.

How mean you, then, that I interpret this?

TEMPLAR (*falling on NATHAN'S neck*).

My father!

NATHAN.

What is this, young man?

TEMPLAR (*quitting his embrace*).

Not son?

I do entreat you, Nathan.

NATHAN.

Dear young man!

TEMPLAR.

Not son? Oh, Nathan, I conjure you now
By holy Nature's strongest, earliest ties—
Respect not later shackles more than these,—
Let it content you here to be a *man*;
Thrust me not from you.

NATHAN.

Dearest friend!

TEMPLAR.

And son?

Not son? Not even now—not now,
When gratitude hath built the bridge for love
Unto your daughter's heart. Not even now,
When the two passions waited but your nod
To melt in one?¹ What, Nathan, silent still?

NATHAN.

Young Templar, you are too precipitate.²

¹ See Note 34.

² See Note 35.

TEMPLAR.

How can it be that I surprise you now
With your own thought? or haply on my lips
You recognise it not—precipitate!

NATHAN.

But, Templar, this before I even know
Which branch of Stauffens you're descended from.

TEMPLAR.

What say you? At a moment such as this,
Is't possible your breast is stirred by nought
But idle curiosity?

NATHAN.

Nay, hear—

In former days I knew a Stauffen well
Whose name was Conrad.

TEMPLAR.

Well, what if my sire

Bore just that very name?

NATHAN.

Was such the fact?

TEMPLAR.

And I'm myself called after him, for Curd
And Conrad are the same.

NATHAN.

My Conrad, then,
Was not your father; for my Conrad was,
Like you, a Templar, and was never wived.

TEMPLAR.

Oh, for all that——

NATHAN.

What mean you?

TEMPLAR.

He might well

Have been my father still.

NATHAN.

Nay, now you jest.

TEMPLAR.

And you in turn are too punctilious;
A fig for sneers at bastards and the like;
The stock, I trow, is not to be despised;¹
But spare me from my proofs of pedigree,
And I on my part will leave yours alone;
Not that I had the shadow of a doubt
Of your ancestral tree — nay, God forbid!
For doubtless you could tell it leaf by leaf
Right up to Abraham, and from that point
I know it and could swear to it myself.

NATHAN.

Now you grow bitter—do I merit this?
Have I as yet refused you anything?

¹ See Note 36.

I merely shrank from granting what you sought
At your first word—no more.

TEMPLAR.

No more than that?

Oh then, forgive me.

NATHAN.

Well then, come with me.

TEMPLAR.

Whither?—into your house?—Oh no, not that;
I fear another fire—I'll wait you here.
If I'm to see her any more, 'twill be
That I may see her whensoever I please;
If not, why then I have already seen
Far too much of her.

NATHAN.

Let me now despatch.

(*He goes.*)

SCENE X.—*The* TEMPLAR, and presently DAYA.

TEMPLAR (*as yet alone*).

Ay, truly, far too much. The brain of man
Grasps such a world of thought, and yet full oft
A trifle fills it to the bursting point,
No matter what the thing with which it teems.
Yet patience! and the spirit quickly works

The seething stuff into coherent thought,
Clears all within, and order comes again.
Do I then love—and loved I ne'er before,
Or was the feeling which I took for love
Not love at all; and is true love indeed
Only what now I feel?

DAYA (*approaching stealthily from one side*).

Sir knight, sir knight!

TEMPLAR.

Who calls?—ha! Daya, you?

DAYA.

I've just contrived
To slip past Nathan as I came along,
But he might see us where we stand, so come,
Come nearer to me—here behind this tree.

TEMPLAR.

What is it now, and why this mystery?

DAYA.

Ay, 'tis about a secret that I come;
A double one indeed—one known to me,
And one to you, sir knight,—let us exchange,
If you will tell me yours I'll tell you mine.

TEMPLAR.

With pleasure, if you'll only kindly say
What you regard as mine; but that, I trow,
Will soon appear from yours; so now begin.

DAYA.

What, *I* begin? No, no, sir knight, not so;
You must do that—I'll follow—be assured
My secret cannot profit you unless
I first know yours; so quickly out with it,
For if I chance to worm it out myself,
Then you'll have told me nothing, and then mine
Remains with me, and you'll have lost your own;
And yet, poor knight, 'twere strange if any man
Could hope to hide a secret such as that
From any woman's eyes.

TEMPLAR.

Though he himself
Might be unconscious of it?

DAYA.

Even so;
And therefore I must be so much your friend
As now to tell you what your secret is.
But first explain why you so suddenly
Broke off our talk, and left us planted there,
And why you go not now to Nathan's house.
Has Recha wrought so little on your heart,
Or haply has she wrought on it too much?
Your bearing teaches me to understand
The frantic flutterings of the hapless bird
Limed to the twig—come, come, confess at once
You love her—love her e'en to madness—then
I'll tell you something.

TEMPLAR.

Madness?—of a truth,
You're right enough in that.

DAYA.

Admit the love,
And I'll condone the madness.

TEMPLAR.

Daya, sure
The thing's absurd upon its very face;
A Templar dote upon a Jewish maid!

DAYA.

'Twould seem in sooth a somewhat senseless thing;
And yet at times a certain thing may have
More sense than we suppose—nor would it be
So unexampled if our Saviour
Drew us to Him by paths the worldly wise
Spontaneously were little like to tread.

TEMPLAR.

A solemn thought! (*Aside.*) If I but substitute
For Saviour, Providence, she's right enough—¹
You make me, Daya, more inquisitive
Than is my wont.

DAYA.

But, oh, this is the land
Of miracles ²

TEMPLAR.

Well, of the marvellous;
Can it be otherwise, since all the world
Flocks here together. Well then, Daya dear,

¹ See Note 37.

² See Note 38.

Take as confessed the thing you seek to know,
I love her—love her—and I cannot think
How I could live without her.

DAYA.

Is it sure?

Then swear to me, sir knight, to make her yours;
Ay, swear to me that you will rescue her
Both here in time and in eternity.

TEMPLAR.

But how?—how *can* I?—can I swear to do
What is not in my power?

DAYA.

'Tis in your power;
I'll bring it now with but a single word
Within your power.

TEMPLAR.

I suppose you mean
Her father now is willing to consent.

DAYA.

Father, forsooth!—her father *must* consent.

TEMPLAR.

But, Daya dear, what mean you by that *must*?
He has not surely fallen among thieves;
I see no *must* about it.

DAYA.

Then he must
Make up his mind to *will* it ; and he must
Gladly do so at last.

TEMPLAR.

What—must, and will !
What if I tell you I've already sought,
And sought in vain, to touch that chord in him ?

DAYA.

What, and he fell not in accord with you ?

TEMPLAR.

He broke into a most discordant note,
Which jarred me sorely.

DAYA.

What is this you say ?
Can it be possible you let him see
The faintest shadow of a wish of yours
For Recha, and he didn't jump for joy,
But frostily drew back, and coldly spoke
Of difficulties ?

TEMPLAR.

Ay, it came to that.

DAYA.

Then I'll not hesitate a moment more.

(*She pauses.*)

TEMPLAR.

And yet you're surely hesitating still.

DAYA.

The man in all things else is, oh, so good,
And I have ever owed so much to him ;
But that he should refuse consent ! God knows
My very heart could bleed to force his hand.

TEMPLAR.

I pray you, Daya, clear me in a word
Of all these doubts ; or if you are yourself
Still doubtful whether that you now would say
Be right or wrong, shameful or laudable,
Then hold your peace, and I will e'en forget
That you had aught to hide.

DAYA.

That spurs me on
Instead of curbing me. So know, sir knight,
Recha's no Jewess—she's a Christian maid !

TEMPLAR (*with cold sarcasm*).

I wish you joy on safe delivery !
The pangs of labour must have racked you sore ;
Go on with pious zeal to people heaven,
If you are powerless to people earth.

DAYA.

Doth my announcement merit such a gibe ;
And can a Christian, a Templar too,
And one who loves her, feel so little joy
To know that Recha is a Christian ?

TEMPLAR.

Ay, and especially the precious fact
That she's a Christian of *your* handiwork.

DAYA.

Ha ! is it thus you understand me, sir ?
Oh no, not so—I fain would see the one
Who could in truth convert her; 'tis her lot
Long to have been a Christian in form,
Though hindered from becoming one in fact.

TEMPLAR.

Explain, or go.

DAYA.

She was a Christian child,
Of Christian parents born, and is baptised.

TEMPLAR (*eagerly*).

And Nathan ?

DAYA.

Nathan ?—she's no child of his.

TEMPLAR.

What ! Nathan not her father ? Know you well
What now you say ?

DAYA.

I know it is the truth—
A truth which oft has caused me bitter tears ;
He's not her father.

TEMPLAR.

Only brought her up,
And represented her to be his child ;
Reared for himself the Christian child as Jew ?

DAYA.

'Tis sure he did so.

TEMPLAR.

And she never knew
What she was born—has never learnt from him
That she was born a Christian, not a Jew ?

DAYA.

Never.

TEMPLAR.

Not only did he rear the child
In this belief, but left the maiden too
To grow in this delusion ?

DAYA.

Ay, alas.

TEMPLAR.

What ! Nathan could do this ! Nathan the Wise,
Nathan the Good, could e'er allow himself
To stifle holy Nature's voice like this !
Thus to misguide the promptings of a heart
Which, left unto itself, had found a bent
Far different ! Oh, Daya, what you now
Have trusted to me is a thing of weight,

And may have weighty consequences too.
I am amazed, and know not for the nonce
What is my duty—give me time to think—
Go now—he's like to pass this way again,
And might surprise us here.

DAYA.

Nay, God forbid !

TEMPLAR.

I'm quite unable to accost him now ;
If you should meet him, only say from me
That we shall meet at Saladin's anon.

DAYA.

Let no reproach of him escape your lips.
This secret must at present be reserved
To lend the final impulse to our scheme,
And, touching Recha, to remove your doubts.
But when you take her to your western home,
Leave me not here.

TEMPLAR.

We'll think of it—now go.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The cloister-alleys of the Convent.*

The LAY BROTHER, and presently the TEMPLAR.

LAY BROTHER (*to himself*).

Ay, ay, the Patriarch is doubtless right,
And yet the mission he encharged to me
Hath prospered scurvily. Why must he still
Commit such matters into hands like mine?
I love not to be sly, to cozen folk,
And poke my nose in other men's concerns;
I do not wish my hand in every pie.
Did I, forsooth, withdraw me from the world,
Touching my own affairs, but to become
Entangled more than ever with the world
For other men?

TEMPLAR (*approaching in haste*).

Good brother, here you are!
I've long been seeking you.

LAY BROTHER.

What, seeking me?

TEMPLAR.

Is't possible you have forgotten me?

LAY BROTHER.

Oh, no: I only thought it was not like
That I should ever see your face again;
And, sure, I hoped to God I never should;
He only knows how odious in my eyes
Was the proposal I was bound to make
To such a youth as you. God only knows
Whether I wished you'd lend a willing ear
To such a thing. He knows how I rejoiced
Within my heart when you so roundly spurned,
Without a moment's hesitation, that
Which would have been so shameful in a knight.
Yet here you are! has then the thought revived,
And does it work upon you after all?

TEMPLAR.

Know you for what I've come? I scarce myself
Can tell you that.

LAY BROTHER.

Belike you've thought it o'er;
And now you think the Patriarch's not far wrong
In holding gold and credit may be won
Through his proposal; that a foe's a foe
Were he our guardian-angel seven times told,—
All this you've pondered over carefully,
And come to offer him your arm. Oh, God!

TEMPLAR.

My dear good man, pray have an easy mind,
I am not come for this, and not for this
Would I now see the Patriarch; on the point

Of which you speak, my mind is still unchanged,
Nor would I for the wealth of all the world
Forfeit the good opinion I have won
From such an upright pious man as you.
I've only come to sound the Patriarch
About a certain point.

LAY BROTHER (*looking timidly around him*).

What, *you* consult
The Patriarch? a knight consult a priest?

TEMPLAR.

Ay, for the point's a somewhat priestly one.

LAY BROTHER.

And yet a priest would ne'er consult a knight,
E'en on the knightliest point.

TEMPLAR.

Because your priest
Is privileged to err—a privilege
For which we knights by no means envy them.
I own that if I only had to act
For my own self, and were responsible
Unto myself alone, in such a case
I'd snap my fingers at your Patriarch.
But certain things I liefer would do ill
According to another's will, than well
According to my own. And yet, I see
Religion's self is but another name
For party zeal, and e'en the man who strives
To bring an open mind to any theme,

Still, without knowing it himself, upholds
The standard only of his own belief,
Blindly maintaining that it *must* be right.

LAY BROTHER.

I'd rather not discuss a point like this,
I scarcely understand the drift of it.

TEMPLAR (*aside*).

Let me consider what my object is,
Advice, or preachment? simple common sense,
Or priestly dogma?

(*To the LAY BROTHER.*)

Thanks, good brother, thanks
For this good hint; a fig for Patriarchs!
Be you my Patriarch; 'tis the Christian
Within the Patriarch I would now consult,
More than the Patriarch whom chance hath placed
Within the Christian. The case is this——

LAY BROTHER.

Oh sir, proceed no more, proceed no more;
You have misjudged me. He who knows too much
Hath many cares, and I have vowed myself
To one alone. Ha! this is fortunate,
See, by a happy chance he comes himself;¹
Stay here, he hath already noted you.

¹ See Note 39.

SCENE II.—THE PATRIARCH, *advancing with priestly pomp along the cloisters, and the Preceding.*

TEMPLAR.

I'd liefer shun him—he were not my man;
A burly, ruddy, smiling prelate, sure;
And in such pomp!

LAY BROTHER.

I wish you saw him, sir,
What time he comes from court—just now he comes
But from a sick man's couch.

TEMPLAR.

How Saladin
Must then be cast into the shade!

PATRIARCH (*as he approaches, to the LAY BROTHER*).

Ho, there!
That surely is the Templar—what's his will?

LAY BROTHER.

I know not.

PATRIARCH (*approaching the TEMPLAR, while his train withdraw to the background, accompanied by the LAY BROTHER*).

How, sir knight, I'm wondrous glad
To see so brave a youth—you are indeed
So very young, something, by Heaven's help,
May come of you.

TEMPLAR.

Scarce, venerable sir,
More than has come of me already—nay,
More likely less.

PATRIARCH.

I would at least desire
That such a pious knight may flourish long
For our dear Christendom, and for the weal
And glory of the sacred cause of God;
Nor will this fail if with due modesty
Your youthful valour heed the ripe advice
Of prudent age. Say in what special thing
I now can serve you.

TEMPLAR.

With the very thing
In which my youth is lacking—with advice.

PATRIARCH.

Gladly—but counsel must be followed, sir.

TEMPLAR.

Not blindly.

PATRIARCH.

Who said blindly?—of a truth
No man should e'er omit to exercise
The reason which was given him by his God,
Where it is adequate—but is it so
In every case?—oh, no—for instance, now,

When God, through one of His own messengers,
That is, through any servant of His word,
Graciously deigns to indicate a means
Whereby we may in any special way
Promote the weal of Christendom entire,
And of His holy Church,—in such a case,
Who would presume by reason's puny light
To cavil at the absolute will of Him
Who's reason's author?—who would dare to judge
The eternal laws of Heaven's majesty
By paltry canons of punctilio?¹
Enough of this—now name the matter, sir,
As touching which you presently apply
For counsel at my hands.

TEMPLAR.

Most reverend sir,
Suppose a Jew who had an only child,
And that, a girl, whom he with tender care
Brought up in all good ways, and whom he loved
More than himself; and she upon her part
Returned his care with most devoted love.
Well now, suppose 'twas told to one of us
This maid was not the daughter of the Jew;
That he had picked her up in infancy,
Bought her—or stolen her—or what you will;
And that, she was in fact a Christian child,
Duly baptised; and that the Jew thought fit
To rear her as a Jewess, and gave out
She was a Jewess, and his daughter too.
Say, reverend father, in a case like this
What should be done?

¹ See Note 40.

PATRIARCH.

I'm horrified !—but first
Tell me, young sir, whether the case you've put
Is actual fact, or mere hypothesis;
Whether you've but imagined such a thing,
Or whether it has really occurred,
And still continues.

TEMPLAR.

Nay, I should have thought
That, merely to pronounce on such a case,
It mattered not unto your Reverence
Whether 'twas fact or fancy.

PATRIARCH.

Mattered not !
See how o'erweening human reason's prone
To err in ghostly things !—it matters much ;
For if the case you've put be nothing more
Than some creation of your sportive wit,
It merits not a moment's serious thought,
And I'd refer you to the theatre ¹
Where points like this are argued *pro* and *con*
With no small pleasure of the auditors.
But if you've not been merely tickling me
With some dramatic quibble—if the case
Be sober fact—if such a thing as this
Has truly happened in our diocese,
And in our well-beloved Jerusalem,
Then, of a truth, sir knight—ay, then——

¹ See Note 41.

TEMPLAR.

What then?

PATRIARCH.

Then instantly the Jew must undergo
The utmost rigour of the penalties
Which Papal and imperial law alike
Prescribe for such a monstrous deed as this,
For such a scandalous outrage.

TEMPLAR.

Is it so?

PATRIARCH.

And know that the aforesaid laws prescribe
Unto the Jew who ventures to seduce
A Christian to apostasy—the stake—
The faggot——

TEMPLAR.

Ay?

PATRIARCH.

And how much more the Jew
Who forcibly hath torn a Christian child
From its baptismal bonds—for is not all,
All that is done to children merely force?
Except, I scarce need say, whate'er the Church
Does unto children.

TEMPLAR.

But suppose the child,
But for the kindly pity of the Jew,
Haply had perished in the direst want?

PATRIARCH.

It matters not—the Jew must still be burnt;
Better she perished here in direst want
Than thus be rescued for eternal woe.
Besides, what business had the Jew, forsooth,
Thus to anticipate the hand of God?
Without him God can rescue whom He will.

TEMPLAR.

Ay, and in spite of him can save a soul.

PATRIARCH.

It matters not—the Jew must surely burn.

TEMPLAR.

This grieves me much; the more so since 'tis said
He has not actually reared the girl
In his own faith; but in no faith at all,
And taught her neither more nor less of God
Than simple reason needs.

PATRIARCH.

It matters not;
The Jew must burn—on this account alone
Well doth he merit burning three times o'er.
What! let a child grow up an infidel!
Utterly fail to train an infant's mind
In the great obligation—to believe!
That is too bad—I wonder much, sir knight,
That you yourself——

TEMPLAR.

Most reverend sir, the rest,
Please God, I'll tell you in confessional.

PATRIARCH.

How, sir!—not straightway tell me all the tale?
Not even name to me the rascal Jew,
Or hale him here? Oh, then, I know my course,
I'll hie me on the spot to Saladin;
In virtue of the pact to which he's sworn
He's bound to shield us in the exercise
Of all the spiritual rights and points of faith
Which appertain to our most holy creed;
Thank God, we still have the original
Vouched by his hand and seal—ay, that we hold.
'Twill be an easy task to make him see
How baneful even for the State it were
For men to have no faith—all social ties
Would be disorganised and rent in twain
If men believed in nothing—out upon
Impiety like this!

TEMPLAR.

'Tis pity, sir,
Scant leisure will not suffer me to hear
Your goodly preachment out, for I am called
To Saladin.

PATRIARCH.

Is't possible?—well then——

TEMPLAR.

I'll e'en prepare him for your visit, sir,
Provided that your Reverence approve.

PATRIARCH.

Oh, oh, I know that you've found favour, sir,
With Saladin. I only trust you'll put
The best construction on me at the court;
My only motive is my zeal for God;
Where I exceed, I do it for His sake.
I pray you, sir, to weigh this matter well;
And sure, sir knight, I may as well suppose
That what you said just now about the Jew
Was a mere theoretic problem.

TEMPLAR.

Yes. (*He goes.*)

PATRIARCH.

But one I now will do my best to solve,
This well may prove to be another job
For brother Bonafides.

(*To the LAY BROTHER.*)

Come, my son.

SCENE III.—*A Chamber in the Palace of the Sultan. A band of slaves bearing numerous bags of gold, and piling them on the floor.*

SALADIN, and presently SITTAH.

SALADIN (*surveying the bags*).

Well, of a truth there seems no end to this;
Doth much o' the stuff remain?

A SLAVE.

As much again !

SALADIN.

Then bear to Sittah all the rest of it.
Where is Al Hafi ? he shall forthwith take
All this into his charge—or, better still,
Shall I not straightway send it to my sire ?
Here 'twill run through my fingers. Yet, in sooth,
A man grows hard at last, and now, methinks,
'Twill cost some skill to wheedle much from me.
Until our Egypt moneys come to hand
E'en hapless Poverty will have to shift
As best it may. I only hope we still
May meet the charges at the Sepulchre,¹
Nor have to send these Christian pilgrims hence
With empty hands—and then——

SITTAH.

And I would ask,
Whatever shall I do with all that gold ?

SALADIN.

First pay yourself whatever is your due,
And hoard the rest, if any still remain.

SITTAH.

Has Nathan not yet brought the Templar here ?

SALADIN.

No, but he seeks him everywhere.

¹ See Note 42.

SITTAH.

Well, see :

As I was turning my old trinkets o'er,
See what I found among them.

(She shows him a miniature portrait.)

SALADIN.

Assad—ha !

'Tis he—'tis he—or rather once was he.
Ah, gallant boy, too early snatched away,
By thy dear side what was the deed of arms
I had not blithely ventured to achieve !
Leave me the portrait, Sittah, leave it here ;
Ay, I remember it, I know it well ;
He gave it to your elder sister Lilla
On that sad morning when she was so loth
To let him leave her arms. It was the last
On which he e'er rode forth—alas, alas,
I suffered him to go, and all alone !
Our Lilla died of grief, and ne'er forgave
That I had let him go so all alone.
He ne'er returned !

SITTAH.

Alack, poor Assad !

SALADIN.

Well,

One day we all shall go, and ne'er return.
Besides—who knows ?—it is not death alone
That mars the promise of a youth like him ;
No, he hath other foes, to whom full oft

The strongest like the weakest must succumb.
Well, be it as it may, I must compare
This portrait with the Templar. I would see
If fancy hath befooled me.

SITTAH.

'Tis for this
That I have brought it ; meanwhile, give it me ;
I'll tell you whether it resembles him ;
A woman's eye best judges things like this.

SALADIN (*to an usher, who enters*).

Who's there? the Templar, say you? bid him come.

SITTAH.

Not to disturb you, or confuse the knight
With curious glances, let me draw aside.

(*She seats herself apart on a divan, and lets her
veil fall.*)

SALADIN.

Ay, so—'tis well—(*to himself*). And now, to hear
his voice !

I wonder how 'twill sound—my Assad's tones
Still slumber somewhere deep within my soul.

SCENE IV.—SALADIN and the TEMPLAR.

TEMPLAR.

Sultan, 'tis I,—your captive.

SALADIN.

Captive? how?
Unto the man to whom I granted life
Should I not also grant his liberty?

TEMPLAR.

What course behoves you it behoves not me
Now to pronounce, but first to learn from you.
Yet, Sultan, surely it would ill beseem
Either my calling or my character
To say I owe you any burning thanks
For my mere life—in any case 'tis still
At your disposal.

SALADIN.

Only use it not
Against me—nay, a pair of hands the more
I'm free to grant unto my enemy,
But not to grant him such a heart the more;
Oh no, not that. I find thee, gallant youth,
All that I pictured thee—thou art indeed
My Assad, soul and body. I might ask
Where hast thou hidden from me all these years;
In what dim grotto hast thou slept till now;
What land of Jinns, what kind Divinity,
Hath thus preserved thy blooming youth so fresh?
I might remind thee of the deeds we did
In other days—nay, I might chide thee now
For having kept one secret from my ken;
For hiding an adventure such as this;
Ay, I could do it, if I saw but thee,
And not myself as well. Now, be it so;

Of this sweet fantasy this much at least
Is solid fact, that in my autumn years
An Assad blooms for me again. Say, knight,
Art thou content with this?

TEMPLAR.

Whate'er may hap
To me from thee—no matter what it be—
My heart accepts with joy.

SALADIN.

That let us now
Prove on the instant. Wilt thou stay with me?
Christian or Mussulman, it matters not,
In the white mantle, or the Moslem robe;¹
Turbaned, or with thy beaver—as thou wilt.
To me 'tis all the same, I ne'er have claimed
That the same bark should grow on every tree.

TEMPLAR.

Else hardly had'st thou been the man thou art,
The hero who belike had liefer been
A delver in the garden of the Lord.²

SALADIN.

Nay, if thou think'st no worse of me than this,
E'en now we're half agreed.

TEMPLAR.

We're wholly so.

SALADIN (*offering him his hand*).

Then 'tis a bargain!

¹ See Note 43.

² See Note 44.

TEMPLAR (*grasping it*).

Ay, and with this hand
Receive far more than thou could'st e'er have wrung
By force from me; henceforth I'm all thine own.

SALADIN.

'Tis too much gain for any single day—¹
But came he not with you?

TEMPLAR.

Who?

SALADIN.

Nathan.

TEMPLAR (*coldly*).

I came alone.

No,

SALADIN.

Oh, what a deed was yours!
And what shrewd luck it was that such a deed
Should work the happiness of such a man.

TEMPLAR.

Mayhap.

SALADIN.

So cold! fie, fie, young man. When God
Does good through us, we should not be so cold;
Not e'en from modesty itself should wish
To *seem* so cold.

¹ See Note 45.

TEMPLAR.

'Tis strange that in the world
Each single thing should have so many sides,
Of which full oft it cannot be conceived
How they may fit together.

SALADIN.

Ever cling
To that which is the best, and thank your God;
He knows how they may fit together. Still,
If you must be so scrupulous, young man,
Then I must be upon my guard with you;
I, too, unfortunately am a thing
Of many sides, and some of them, perchance,
May seem to you to fit not all too well.

TEMPLAR.

I smart at the rebuke, because in truth
Suspicion's not a common fault with me.

SALADIN.

Then say of whom you entertain it now;
'Twould seem 'tis Nathan. Is it possible?
You suspect Nathan! Speak, explain yourself;
Give me this first proof of your confidence.

TEMPLAR.

I've nought 'gainst Nathan—no, I'm only vexed
With my own self.

SALADIN.

And wherefore so?

TEMPLAR.

To think
That in my waking moments I could dream
A Jew could e'er unlearn to be a Jew.

SALADIN.

What mean you now? Out with this waking dream!

TEMPLAR.

Sultan, you know of Nathan's daughter. Well,
That which I did for her I merely did
Because I did it—it was chance alone.
Too proud to reap a crop of gratitude
Where I had never sown, from day to day
I scorned to look upon the girl again.
Her father then was absent—he returns;
He hears the tale, and straightway seeks me out;
Loads me with thanks—declares he hopes his child
Has won my favour; talks of prospects, prates
Of joyous days that possibly may come.
Enough—I let myself be thus cajoled.
I go with him—I see the maid, and find
Oh such a maid. Ah! Sultan, I must blush!

SALADIN.

What!—must you blush because a Jewish maid
Hath touched your heart?—nay, never tell me that.

TEMPLAR.

I blush to think that my impulsive heart,
Moved by the kindly prattle of the Jew,
Struggled so little against such a love;

Once more I madly sprang into the flames ;
For now I sued—and now I was disdained !

SALADIN.

Disdained !

TEMPLAR.

The cautious sire did not indeed
Flatly reject me—but the cautious sire
Must make inquiries first—must think it o'er.
He thought perhaps that I had done the same,
Made due inquiry, weighed the *pros* and *cons*,
What time his daughter shrieked amid the flames ?
By Heaven ! 'tis verily a splendid thing
To be so wise and circumspect !

SALADIN.

Come, 'come,
Make some allowance for an aged man—
And then, how long do you suppose his doubts
Are like to last?—or think you he'll insist
That you must first become a Jew yourself ?

TEMPLAR.

Who knows ?

SALADIN.

Why, he who knows what Nathan is.

TEMPLAR.

The superstitions of our early years,
E'en when we know them to be nothing more,
Lose not for that their hold upon our hearts ;
Not all are free who ridicule their chains.

SALADIN.

Ripely remarked—but Nathan's not like that.

TEMPLAR.

The worst of superstitions is to deem
Our special chains the most endurable —

SALADIN.

Perhaps—but, Nathan——

TEMPLAR.

And to these alone
To trust purblind humanity until
Its eye can bear the brilliant noon of truth.

SALADIN.

That well may be, perhaps, but Nathan's case
Is no such weakness.

TEMPLAR.

So I thought myself,
But how if this same paragon of men
Should happen to be such a downright Jew
That he has sought to seize on Christian babes
That he might bring them up as Jews—how then?

SALADIN.

But who says that of him?

TEMPLAR.

The girl herself
With whom he lures me on—with hope of whom

He fain would *seem* to pay me for a deed
He would not have it said I did for nought—
This very girl is not his child. She is
A kidnapped Christian waif.

SALADIN.

Whom ne'ertheless
He now will not consent to give to you?

TEMPLAR (*with vehemence*).

Whether he will or no, he's now found out;
The tolerant prater is unmasked at last;
I'll find the means to set the hounds on him,
This Jewish wolf in philosophic fleece,
Who'll rend his hide!

SALADIN (*with severity*).

Come, Christian, be calm!

TEMPLAR.

Christian, be calm! when Jew and Mussulman
May hotly play the Mussulman and Jew,
Must the poor Christian alone not dare
To play the Christian?

SALADIN (*with growing severity*).

Christian, be calm!

TEMPLAR (*more calmly*).

I own I feel the weight of the reproach
Compressed by Saladin in these two words;
How would your Assad have comported him
In such a case?

SALADIN.

No better than yourself ;
With no less vehemence, perhaps—but say,
Who hath already taught you, like himself,
To sway me with a single word ? In sooth,
If all be true that you have told me now,
I scarce therein can recognise my Jew.
Yet he is stil' my friend, and all my friends
Must dwell in harmony ; so, be advised ;
Proceed with caution—sacrifice him not
To the blind fury of your fanatics ;
Breathe not a matter which your pious priests
Might well compel me to avenge on him ;
Play not the Christian to spite the Jew,
Or Moslem either.

TEMPLAR.

Soon it would have been
Too late to think of saving him ; but now
I thank the Patriarch's holy thirst for blood,
Which made me shudder to become his tool.

SALADIN.

How ! went you to the Patriarch, forsooth,
Before you came to me ?

TEMPLAR.

Sultan, I did,
In the first gust of passion, in the whirl
Of indecision—pardon me. I fear
You now no longer will discern in me
A likeness to your Assad.

SALADIN.

Save, indeed
This very fear itself¹—methinks I know
The faults from which our very virtues spring;
Foster the virtues only, then the faults
With me shall work you little prejudice.
But leave me now—go and seek Nathan out,
E'en as he sought for you, and bring him here;
I now must see you reconciled to him.
And if in very truth you've set your heart
Upon this maid, be tranquil—she is yours.
And Nathan too must now be made to smart
For having dared to rear a Christian child
In total ignorance of swine's flesh—go.

*(The TEMPLAR withdraws. SITTAH quits her
seat on the divan, and advances.)*

SCENE V.—SALADIN and SITTAH.

SITTAH.

'Tis marvellous!

SALADIN.

Well, Sittah, you'll allow
Our Assad must have been a goodly youth.

SITTAH.

Ay, if he was like this, and if 'twas not
The Templar's self who for this portrait sat.
But, Saladin, how could you e'er forget
To ask him who and what his parents were?

¹ See Note 46.

SALADIN.

And in especial who his mother was,
And if she ever was in Palestine;
Is that your drift?

SITTAH.

A precious thought of yours!

SALADIN.

Oh, nought more possible; our Assad was
So welcome amid handsome Christian dames,
And such a squire of handsome Christian dames,
That once, indeed, the rumour went—well, well,
We would not dwell on it—enough for me
I have him once again, and welcome him
With all his foibles, all the fitful moods
Of his warm heart. Oh, Nathan must indeed
Give him the maid—what think you?

SITTAH.

Give the maid!

Say, give her *up*.

SALADIN.

Just so; what right has he,
If not her father, to control her lot?
The man who saved her life by such a deed
Alone can enter on the rights of him
Who gave it.

SITTAH.

How then, brother, would it do
To take the girl at once to be your ward,

Withdrawing her from hands which have no more
The right to keep her?

SALADIN.

Where's the need for that?

SITTAH.

Well, not exactly need—I must confess
'Tis harmless curiosity alone
Suggests my counsel—there are certain men
Regarding whom I ever fain would know
The sort of maiden they can love.

SALADIN.

Well, then,

Send for her straight.

SITTAH.

Oh, may I, Saladin?

SALADIN.

Only spare Nathan's feelings—by no means
Must Nathan think that we would tear the girl
From him by force.

SITTAH.

Oh, never fear.

SALADIN.

Meanwhile

I must find out Al Hafi's whereabouts.

SCENE VI.—*Hall in NATHAN'S house, looking towards the palm trees, as in the opening scene. The wares and precious stuffs, lately brought by NATHAN, partly unpacked and displayed. NATHAN and DAYA contemplating them.*

DAYA.

Oh, all's magnificent!—most rare and choice;
All such as you alone could wish to give.
Whence comes this silver stuff with sprays of gold,
And what might be its price?—Oh, *that* I call
A bridal dress indeed!—no queen could wish
A braver one.

NATHAN.

Why just a bridal dress?

DAYA.

Well now, you haply did not think of that
What time you bought it; but in very truth
That and no other must it be—it looks
Expressly made for that—the snow-white ground,
Emblem of purity—the golden threads,
Which everywhere run snaking through the stuff,
Symbol of riches—look you, 'tis divine!

NATHAN.

What means this wealth of wit?—whose bridal dress
Would you describe with this symbolic lore;
Are you the bride perhaps?

DAYA.

Who?—I?

NATHAN.

Who, then?

DAYA.

I, gracious heavens!—I!

NATHAN.

Who is she, then?—

Whose bridal garment are you prating of?

All that you see is yours, and yours alone.

DAYA.

Mine!—meant for *me*!—not meant for Recha, then?

NATHAN.

That which I brought for Recha still lies packed
Within another bale—come, take the stuff;
Off with your trumpery.

DAYA.

No, tempter, no;
If they comprised the wealth of all the world
I would not touch them till you swear to me
To use this single opportunity,
The like of which God ne'er may send again.—

NATHAN.

Use what?—and opportunity for what?

DAYA.

Oh, look not so unconscious. In a word,
The Templar loves our Recha—make her his.

Thus your transgression will be closed at last,
That sin which I no longer can conceal;
Thus will she come once more 'mid Christian folk,
Once more be what she is, or be once more
That which she was; then, too, we could not say
That all your many kindly acts to us,
Which we can ne'er sufficiently requite,
Were nought but coals of fire upon your head.

NATHAN.

Harping once more upon your ancient harp !
Though haply fitted with an extra string,
Not well attuned, or like to hold.

DAYA.

How so ?

NATHAN.

The Templar suits me, and should have my child
Sooner than e'er another in the world,
Were it not—well, have patience, I entreat.

DAYA.

Patience, forsooth !—why patience, I declare,
Is *your* old harp on which you ever strum.

NATHAN.

I ask it only for a few days more.
But see !—who's this who comes ?—a monk, me-
thinks;
Go, ask him what he wants.

DAYA.

What can he want?

(She goes towards the Monk.)

NATHAN.

Well, give him alms, and that before he asks.

*(To himself.)*Would I could sound this Templar's history,
Without betraying what my object is!For if I tell him this, and if it prove
That my surmise is groundless, then indeed
I shall have risked a father's rights in vain.DAYA *(returning)*.

The monk would speak with you.

NATHAN.

Then bid him come;

And you may leave me now.

SCENE VII.—NATHAN *and the* LAY BROTHER.NATHAN *(still to himself)*.Oh, I would fain be Recha's father still!
And can I not be that, e'en though I cease
To bear the name? With her, in any case,
With her I must for ever bear the name,
If she but know how dear it is to me.*(To the LAY BROTHER.)*

Good brother, say what I can do for you.

LAY BROTHER.

Not much—but oh, good Nathan, I rejoice
To see you still in health.

NATHAN.

You know me, then?

LAY BROTHER.

Ay, that I do—who knows you not?—your name
Hath been impressed on many a needy palm,
And mine still bears its stamp these many years

NATHAN (*feeling in his purse*).

Well, brother, let me freshen it a bit.

LAY BROTHER.

Thanks; but 'twere robbery of poorer men;
I'll nought of you—but rather, by your leave,
I now would freshen up *my* name a bit
Within your mind, since I too can lay claim
Once to have placed within your hand a thing
Of no mean worth.

NATHAN.

Forgive me—I must blush—
Name it, and, to atone my heedlessness,
Take from me now its value seven times told.

LAY BROTHER.

Before all else, first hear how I myself
Only this very day was put in mind
Of that I pledged with you.

NATHAN.

You pledged with *me*!

LAY BROTHER.

Not long ago I filled a hermit's cell
On Quarantana, nigh to Jericho,¹
When suddenly a band of Arab thieves
Pulled down my little chapel, razed my cell,
And dragged me off with them. By luck I fled,
And made my way unto the Patriarch here
To crave of him some other little spot
Where I in solitude might serve my God
Until a peaceful death might end my days.

NATHAN.

Brother, I burn to know the rest—be brief;
What was the pledge—the pledge you left with me?

LAY BROTHER.

Anon, good Nathan;—well, the Patriarch
Promised that I should have a hermit's cell
On Tabor, on the earliest vacancy;
Meanwhile his orders were that I should wait
As a lay-brother in the convent here;
And here I am, good Nathan; and I long
A hundred times for Tabor every day,
Because the Patriarch ever foists on me
All sorts of tasks from which my soul recoils;
Such, for example——

¹ See Note 47.

NATHAN.

Nay, proceed, I pray.

LAY BROTHER.

I'm coming to it now. Some one, it seems,
This day has whispered in the Patriarch's ear
That somewhere here there dwells a certain Jew
Who's bringing up a certain Christian child
As his own daughter——

NATHAN (*with alarm*).

What!

LAY BROTHER.

Nay, hear me out.

Well then, the Patriarch has commissioned me
Forthwith, if possible, to trace this Jew,
Since he is vehemently stirred with wrath
At such an outrage, which appears to him
The very sin against the Holy Ghost;
That is to say, the sin which, of all sins,
Is held by us to be the greatest sin,
Except that, God be thanked, we scarcely know
In what it specially consists. But now
My drowsy conscience suddenly awoke,
And it occurred to me that I myself
Not long ago had haply given rise
To this unpardonable, deadly sin.
Now tell me whether, eighteen years ago,
A certain squire confided to your hands
A tiny maid of but a few weeks old?

NATHAN.

How's this? Well, truly—ay, it is the fact.

LAY BROTHER.

Nathan, look well on me. I was the squire!

NATHAN.

What! You?

LAY BROTHER.

The knight from whom I brought the babe
Was one Von Filneck, if I do not err;
Ay, Wolf von Filneck.

NATHAN.

Yes, that was the name.

LAY BROTHER.

It seems the mother had but lately died;
And then the knight had suddenly to flit,
Methinks to Gaza, where a mite like that
Could not go with him, so he bade me bear
The babe to you, and it was at Darún¹
I gave it to you.

NATHAN.

That is so indeed.

LAY BROTHER.

'Twere little wonder if my memory
Deceived me after such a lapse of time;
And then I've served so many valiant knights,

¹ See Note 48.

And this one truly all too short a time;
Soon after that he fell at Ascalon;
He was a kindly knight.

NATHAN.

Ay, that he was;
And one to whom I owed a world of thanks,
Since more than once he saved me from the sword.

LAY BROTHER.

If so, you must have been the more rejoiced
To be the guardian of his little girl.

NATHAN.

Ay, you may think it.

LAY BROTHER.

Well, where is she now?
Surely she hath not died by any chance;
Oh, say not that she's dead,—for, if she lives,
And no one else be privy to her case,
All things may yet go well.

NATHAN.

Ha, think you so?

LAY BROTHER.

Now mark me, Nathan, thus I look at things:—
Whene'er I purpose to perform a deed
Good in itself, but bordering too close
On what is bad, I ever think it best
To leave the deed undone; since what is bad

Is always pretty palpable to us,
While what is good is seldom quite so plain,—
Now it was natural enough that you,
To do your best in bringing up the child,
Should treat her as your daughter. Very well,
You did the thing in perfect faith and love,
And is it right that you should smart for this?
I ne'er can see the justice of the case;
I own your conduct had been more discreet
Had you employed some other hand to rear
This Christian infant as a Christian;
But in that case the daughter of your friend
Had lacked your love; and in their tender years
Children need love before all other things,
Were it no more than some dumb creature's love,
Ay, before Christianity itself;
Trust me, there's ever time enough for that;
And if the maid but grew before your eyes
Healthy and good, then in the eyes of God
She still remained as precious as before.
And was not Christianity itself
Built up in Jewry?—it hath vexed me oft,
And cost me many a bitter bitter tear
That Christians should so utterly forget
Their own Redeemer was himself a Jew.

NATHAN.

Good brother, you must be my advocate
When hatred and hypocrisy are roused
To hunt me down for such an act as mine;
Ah, such an act! You, brother, you alone
Shall know the facts; but they must die with you;
I've ne'er been tempted by a vain desire

To tell them to another man; to you,
And to your simple piety alone,
I tell them now, since none but such as you
Can rightly measure or can comprehend
What sort of deeds a man who loves his God
Can bring himself to do.

LAY BROTHER.

You're deeply moved,
Ay, and your eyes are running o'er with tears!

NATHAN.

You brought the infant to me at Darún;
But then you could not know that, just before,
The Christians had slaughtered every Jew
Who dwelt in Gath¹—ay, massacred them all,
Sparing nor sex nor age—nor knew you then
That my poor wife and seven hopeful sons,
Whom I had sent for safety, as I thought,
To a dear brother's house, were burnt alive
Within its walls.

LAY BROTHER.

Oh, great and righteous God!

NATHAN.

Just as you came I'd lain three days and nights
In dust and ashes bowed before the Lord;
I raved—I writhed—I wrangled with my God;
I wept, I cursed myself and all mankind,
And swore eternal and undying hate
To Christendom entire.

¹ See Note 49.

LAY BROTHER.

I marvel not.

NATHAN.

But reason gradually came again,
And said with gentle voice: 'God surely is,
And such was His inscrutable decree;
Now practise that which thou hast known so long,
To practise which is surely no more hard
Than 'tis to grasp it, if thou only wilt;
Stand up!'—I stood, and called to God: 'I will,
If Thou but help my will.'—You lighted then
From off your horse, and handed me the child
Wrapped in your mantle. What you said to me,
What I replied, I have forgotten now;
This much alone I know—I took the babe,
I bore it to my couch—I kissed its cheek;
And then I fell upon my bended knees,
And, sobbing, cried aloud: 'My God, of seven,
Here's one restored already!'

LAY BROTHER.

Nathan, sure
You are a Christian, by Heaven you are,
None better ever breathed!

NATHAN.

Alack, alack!
That which makes me a Christian in your eyes
Makes you a Jew in mine—enough, enough;
Let us no longer but unman ourselves;
We now must act—and though a seven-fold love:

Has knit my heart to this one stranger maid,
Although the very thought is death to me
That I may lose once more my seven sons
In losing her, yet, if it please the Lord
To claim her at my hands, I must obey.

LAY BROTHER.

'Tis even so—it was my very wish
To breathe such counsel, but 'tis needless now;
Your own good genius hath inspired the thought

NATHAN.

Ay, but I will not lightly let her go
To the first casual claimant.

LAY BROTHER.

Surely not.

NATHAN.

Who hath not greater rights to her than I
Must at the least have prior ones.

LAY BROTHER.

He must.

NATHAN.

Derived from nature and from kinship.

LAY BROTHER.

Ay,

Such is my thought.

NATHAN.

If you will name a man
Who by relationship can claim the maid,
As uncle, brother, cousin—what you will—
I'll ne'er resist his claim. She's formed to be
The ornament of any house or creed.
I would you knew more of your Christian knight,
And of his race, than I could ever glean.

LAY BROTHER.

Good Nathan, that is hardly to be thought,
For you've already heard I served the knight
But all too brief a space.

NATHAN.

Then know you not
At least the stock from which her mother came?
Methinks she was a Stauffen.

LAY BROTHER.

Possibly.

I think she was.

NATHAN.

And was her brother not
Conrad von Stauffen, and a Templar Knight?

LAY BROTHER.

Unless I err, he was. But wait a bit,
I think I still possess a little book
Of the late knight my master, which I plucked
From out his bosom, as we buried him
In front of Ascalon.

NATHAN.

What sort of book ?

LAY BROTHER.

A book containing prayers—what we call
A breviary, in fact; and that, methought,
A Christian man might find a useful thing,
Though not myself, indeed, since as for me,
I cannot even read.

NATHAN.

Say on, say on !

LAY BROTHER.

Well, on the fly-leaf of this little book,
And also at the end, as I've been told,
There is a record in my master's hand
Of all his relatives, and of his wife's.

NATHAN.

The very thing ! Run, run, and bring the book,
I'll pay you for it with its weight in gold,
Besides a thousand thanks—Oh, fetch it quick !

LAY BROTHER.

Gladly; but what my master wrote in it
Is Arabic.

NATHAN.

It matters not—quick—bring it here.

(*The LAY BROTHER goes.*)

My God ! if I could only keep the maid,

And win a son-in-law like this to boot !
'Twere too much luck, I fear. Well, come what may.
But now I wonder who it can have been
Who went and whispered in the Patriarch's ear
A thing like this. Well, I must not forget
To find this out. I wonder if it was
Our precious Daya.

SCENE VIII.—DAYA *and* NATHAN.DAYA (*in haste and agitation*).

Oh, Nathan, Nathan, only think !

NATHAN.

Think what ?

DAYA.

The poor, dear child was fairly stunned by it ;
They've sent——

NATHAN.

The Patriarch ?

DAYA.

No, the Sultan's sister,
The Princess Sittah——

NATHAN.

Not the Patriarch ?

DAYA.

No; Sittah, don't you hear? The Princess Sittah
Hath sent and bade her to be brought to her.

NATHAN.

Hath sent for Recha!—Sittah sent for her!
Well, if it's Sittah who has sent for her,
And not the Patriarch——

DAYA.

Why harp on *him*?

NATHAN.

Then you have had no word from him of late;
Nor whispered anything into his ear?

DAYA.

Who? I? To *him*?

NATHAN.

Where are the messengers?

DAYA.

They stand without.

NATHAN.

Well, for precaution's sake
I'll speak with them myself. I only trust
The Patriarch is not behind it all. (*He goes.*)

DAYA.

And I am anxious on another score.
Ay, sure a girl that is supposed to be
The only child of such a wealthy Jew
Were no bad catch for any Mussulman.
The Templar's chance is gone, unless indeed
I venture now upon the second step,
And tell her plainly what she really is.
Courage! for this I straightway will employ
The very first occasion I may find
To get her by herself; and that will be
Now as I go along with her to Court.
At least a slight preliminary hint
Can do no harm. Ay, ay, 'tis now or ne'er.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber in the Palace of the Sultan, the same wherein the treasure had been piled, as in the Third Scene of the Fourth Act. The bags of gold still there.*

SALADIN, and presently some of his Mamelukes.

SALADIN (*entering*).

The gold still here!—and no one seems to know
Where to find out the Dervish—it is like
He's lighted somewhere at his darling chess,
Which sometime makes him e'en forget *himself*,
Then why not also me—patience!

(*To a Mameluke who enters.*)

What now?

MAMELUKE.

Sultan, good news at last—joy, Sultan, joy!
The caravan from Cairo hath arrived,
And safely brought you from the teeming Nile
Your seven years' tribute.

SALADIN.

Bravo, Ibrahim!

You are in sooth a harbinger of good;
Ha! safely come at last!—now take my thanks
For your glad tidings.

MAMELUKE (*expectantly, to himself*).

Well, I wish he'd pay.

SALADIN.

What do you wait for?—go.

MAMELUKE.

What!—nothing else
Unto the welcome messenger?

SALADIN.

What else?

MAMELUKE.

The harbinger of tidings such as that
Looks for a courier's largesse—otherwise
I'm like to be the first whom Saladin
Has e'er fobbed off with empty thanks alone;
Something to boast of truly!—ay, the first,
The very first with whom he ever played
The niggard's part.

SALADIN (*pointing to the heaps of gold*).

Well, take a bag from there.

MAMELUKE.

No, no—not now—not if you offered me
The whole of them.

SALADIN.

Would you defy me thus?
Come, then, take two—still obstinate!—He goes,
Surpassing me in generosity!

To him it must be harder to refuse
Than 'tis to me to give. What can it be
That makes me now, so near my closing scene,
Suddenly wish to be an altered man? ¹
Should Saladin not die as Saladin,
Then he should ne'er have lived as Saladin.

A SECOND MAMELUKE.

Ho, Sultan!

SALADIN.

If you've come to tell the news——

SECOND MAMELUKE.

That the Egyptian convoy hath arrived.

SALADIN.

I know 't already.

SECOND MAMELUKE.

Then I've come too late!

SALADIN.

Why say too late? You'll take a bag or two
For your good will.

SECOND MAMELUKE.

Well, two and one make three.

SALADIN.

You reckon nimbly—help yourself to three.

¹ See Note 50.

SECOND MAMELUKE.

Another messenger comes hard behind;
That is, if he is able.

SALADIN.

Pray, explain.

SECOND MAMELUKE.

Well, he most probably has broke his neck;
For when the three of us were well assured
The convoy had arrived, we dashed at once
To bring the news to you—the foremost horse
Stumbled and fell, and so I got the lead,
And kept it too, until we reached the town,
Where Ibrahim, sly rogue, had better skill
Among the alleys.

SALADIN.

Oh, but I'm concerned
For him who fell! ride quick and learn his case.

SECOND MAMELUKE.

Ay, that I'll gladly do; and if he lives
I'll give him half of these three bags of gold.
(*He goes.*)

SALADIN.

See, there's a noble fellow if you like!
Who else can boast of Mamelukes like these?
And may I not be suffered to suppose
That my example helped to form them thus?
Then out upon the thought that at the last
I should unteach the lessons that I gave!

A THIRD MAMELUKE.

Sultan, what ho !

SALADIN.

Are you the one who fell?

THIRD MAMELUKE.

No, Sultan, no; I come but to announce
That Emir Mansor, he who brought the gold,
Has just alighted.

SALADIN.

Bring him quickly here ;
Ha ! here he is himself.

SCENE II.—EMIR MANSOR *and* SALADIN.

SALADIN.

Welcome, brave Emir ! So you're come at last ,
Oh, Mansor, Mansor, I have looked for you
These many weary days !

MANSOR.

This missive, sire,
Will tell you of the tumult in Thebais
Which Abdul Kasim had perforce to quell
Before we dared to start the caravan ;
But since we started I have urged it on
As much as might be.

SALADIN.

I believe you well.
And now, good Mansor, if you do not grudge
This added labour, take without delay
Fresh guards for the protection of the train,
And hold you ready for a further march,
Since you must bear the bulk of all this gold
Unto my father on Mount Lebanon.

MANSOR.

Most gladly, Sultan.

SALADIN.

And look well you take
Sufficient escort, for on Lebanon
Things are no longer safe. You've doubtless heard
The Templars now are on the move again;
So be upon your guard. Where halts the train?
I fain would see it and myself dispose
Its due equipment.

(*To a slave.*)

Ho, you fellow there,
Say to my sister I'll be with her soon.

SCENE III.—*The palm grove before NATHAN'S house.*

TEMPLAR (*alone*).

I'll ne'er again put foot within his doors;¹
He's certain presently to show himself.
Once on a time they yearned to see me come,

¹ See Note 51.

And now 'tis like enough to come to this
That he will bid me cease to haunt his house.
Oh, I'm provoked with him—yet wherefore so?—
Why all this bitterness against the Jew?
So far at least he has refused me nought,
And Saladin himself has now engaged
To work upon him—Is it possible
The Christian's more inveterate in me
Than is in him the Jew?—ay, who can tell?—
Else why should I so bitterly resent
The trivial larceny he took such pains
To practise on the Christians? And yet
'Twas no such trivial larceny to take
A thing like that!—And who can claim her now?
She's ne'er the chattel of the nameless hind
Who cast the shapeless block on life's bleak shore
And straightway vanished. Rather is she his,
The craftsman's who in that poor derelict
Conceived and fashioned such a peerless thing.
Ay, Recha's real father is the Jew,
Spite of the Christian who gendered her;
The Jew alone. For if she were no more
Than e'er another comely Christian maid,
Without the added charm of all the gifts
Which only such a Jew could give to her,
Say, oh my heart, could she have witched me thus?
Ah no, in sooth! Her sweetest smile were then
Nought but a winsome movement of the lips;
While that which raised it never could explain
The glamour which it sheds on all her face.
Oft have I witnessed smiles as sweet as hers
Lavished on folly, raillery, or jests,
On fulsome suitors, or on flattering fools,

And did they ravish me, or make me yearn
To flutter in their sunshine all my days?
And yet I harbour wrath against the man
Whose hand alone hath made her what she is!
How's this? And have I merited the scorn
With which I was dismissed by Saladin?¹
Whether I did or no, 'twas bad enough
That he should think I did; and oh, how small,
How despicable too I must have seemed
In eyes like his—and all about a girl!
Curd, Curd! this must not be—control thyself.
And what if Daya merely chose to prate
Of matters which she ne'er could prove? But see,
See where he comes at last—and who is yon
With whom he's plunged in talk? I do believe
It is my friend the monk! Why then, for sure,
He now knows all, and they've betrayed him now
Unto the Patriarch. Well, here's a coil!
See what my blundering has brought about.
To think that one stray spark of passion's fire
Should set the brain of man in such a blaze!
Now must I swift decide upon my course;
But meanwhile let me wait aside a space,
Perhaps the monk may leave him presently.

SCENE IV.—NATHAN *and the* LAY BROTHER.

NATHAN.

Once more, good brother, take my heartfelt thanks.

LAY BROTHER.

And you the same from me.

¹ See Note 52.

NATHAN.

Why thanks from you?
For my sheer wilfulness to force on you
That which you did not want? But you yourself
Were wilful too. You did not choose to be
By force made richer than I am myself.

LAY BROTHER.

In any case the book was none of mine;
It is the daughter's property; nay, more,
'Tis all the patrimony that she has,
Unless I count yourself. God only grant
You never may have reason to repent
All that you've done for her.

NATHAN.

Repent, indeed!
That I can never do—be sure of that.

LAY BROTHER.

But for your Templars and your Patriarchs.

NATHAN.

Not any harm that they could do to me
Could ever make me rue a single act
That I have done—and this the least of all.
And, after all, are you so very sure
It is a Templar who is hounding on
This Patriarch of yours?

LAY BROTHER.

I think it must.
A Templar spoke with him not long ago;
And all I've heard corroborates the thing.

NATHAN.

And yet at present there is only one
In all Jerusalem; and him I know;
Nay more, he is a special friend of mine,
A young, a noble, honourable man.

LAY BROTHER.

Just so—the very same—but what one is,
And what the world compels one oft to be,
Don't always correspond.

NATHAN.

Alas, 'tis true.

Then be my enemy whoe'er he may,
E'en let him do his best or do his worst,
With your book, brother, I defy them all,
I'm going with it to the Sultan now.

LAY BROTHER.

God prosper you; and now I'll take my leave.

NATHAN.

And yet you have not even seen her yet!
Come soon, come oft. If but the Patriarch
This day discovers nought! Yet after all
You now may tell him whatsoe'er you please.

LAY BROTHER.

Not I—farewell.

NATHAN.

Well, brother, think of us.

(LAY BROTHER goes.)

My God, I now would thank Thee on my knees!

To think the tangled skein, whose stubborn knots
Oft caused me gnawing apprehension, now
Unravels of itself! Oh, God, what joy
To think that now I've nothing to conceal,
And now can walk amid my fellow-men
As freely as I've done in sight of Thee,
Who dost not always judge us by our acts,
Acts, oh, so oftentimes not all our own!

SCENE V.—NATHAN *and the* TEMPLAR, *who advances from a retired spot.*

TEMPLAR.

Hold, Nathan, hold—take me along with you.

NATHAN.

What, you, Sir Knight? How is it that you failed
To meet me at the Sultan's?

TEMPLAR.

It would seem
We missed each other—be not vexed for that.

NATHAN.

Not I, but Saladin may chafe at it.

TEMPLAR.

When I came there, you had but just withdrawn.

NATHAN.

So you had speech with him? Then all is well?

TEMPLAR.

Ay, but he wants to see us face to face
Together there.

NATHAN.

'Tis all the better—come;
E'en now I was about to go to him.

TEMPLAR.

I fain would ask you, Nathan, who was he
Who left you even now.

NATHAN.

How? don't you know?

TEMPLAR.

It surely was the monk, the worthy soul
Who acts as lurcher to the Patriarch.

NATHAN.

Maybe—at all events the honest man
Is at the Patriarch's beck.

TEMPLAR.

'Tis no bad thought
To send Simplicity to clear the way
For Knavery.

NATHAN.

Ay, if your simpleton
Be simple only, and not honest too.

TEMPLAR.

No Patriarch ever trusts an honest fool.

NATHAN.

I'll answer for the monk—he's not the man
Would help the Patriarch to carry out
A knavish scheme.

TEMPLAR.

So he gives out at least.
But has he ne'er said aught to you of me?

NATHAN.

Of you? no, nought of you—the worthy man
Scarce knows your name.

TEMPLAR.

I hardly think he does.

NATHAN.

Well, of a certain Templar, I confess
He said to me——

TEMPLAR.

What said he?

NATHAN.

What he said
Proves absolutely that he meant not you.

TEMPLAR.

Who knows? Come, tell me what he said.

NATHAN.

He said

A certain Templar had preferred a charge
Against me to that Patriarch of his.

TEMPLAR.

A charge 'gainst you, forsooth ! Well, by his leave,
That is a fiction. I am not a man
Who would be likely to disown my acts,
And what I did, I did ; nor am I one
Who would maintain that all his acts are right.
Why should a single error make me blush ?
And am I not resolved to do my best
Now to retrieve it ; and do I not know
How far this may be done ? Now, Nathan, hear,
I'm your lay brother's Templar, sure enough,
Who laid the charge against you. All the same,
You know what maddened me against you then,
What caused my blood to boil in every vein.
Fool that I was, I needs must throw myself
Body and soul into your arms. You know
How you received my suit—how cold you were,
How lukewarm, rather, which is worse than cold ;
How cautiously you strove to stave me off ;
With what irrelevant and air-drawn pleas
You made believe to answer to my prayer ;
Scarce can I bear to think upon it now
And yet be calm. Now, Nathan, mark me well,
While in this ferment, comes me Daya next,
And slips into my ear her secret news,
Which seemed to furnish all at once the key
To your mysterious conduct.

NATHAN.

How was that?

TEMPLAR.

I'll tell you presently —I then made sure
You'd ne'er give up to any Christian
A being whom you once had won like this
From Christian hands, and so I then resolved
As briefly and as kindly as I might
To put you out of pain.

NATHAN.

Your brevity
Was plain enough, but yet I fail to see
The kindness of your act.

TEMPLAR.

I freely own
I acted madly. You had done no wrong;
'That crack-brained Daya knew not what she said;
She owes some grudge to you, and only sought
By this to plunge you in some evil snare,
Yet, for all that, I acted like a fool,
For ever rashly rushing to extremes,
Too passive now, now too impetuous;
I crave your pardon, Nathan.

NATHAN.

It is yours.

TEMPLAR.

I told the Patriarch, but I named you not;
That is a fiction, as I said but now;

I only put the case in general terms,
That I might gather what he thought of it;
That, too, had better have been left undone,
For even then I knew the Patriarch
Was but a cogging knave. Then why, you'll say,
Why could I not have spoken to yourself;
Why make the hapless girl incur the risk
To lose a father such as you? Well, well,
The knavish scheming of the Patriarch,
Ever consistent in his roguery,
Suddenly brought me to myself again;
And even if he knew your name, what then;
He only could presume to seize the girl
If she were claimed by no one but yourself;
He dare not hale her to a nunnery
Save from *your* house—then give the maid to *me*;
Give her to me—then let the Patriarch come;
He'll hardly dare to drag my wife from me;
Give her at once, be she your child or not,
Be she a Jewess or a Christian,
Or of no creed at all—it matters not;
I'll never never ask you what she is;
To me 'tis all the same.

NATHAN.

Do you suppose
That I have any need to hide the truth?

TEMPLAR.

Let that be as it may.

NATHAN.

I've ne'er denied
To you, or any who could claim to know,

That she's a Christian, and nought to me
But my adopted child. Why, then, you'll ask,
Why have I never said as much to her?
But that's a point I need not to unfold
Save unto her.

TEMPLAR.

Not even unto her
Need you unfold it—let her look on you
With the same eyes as she has ever done;
Spare her the revelation—you alone
Possess her now, and can dispose of her;
Then give her to me, Nathan, I entreat;
'Tis I alone who, for the second time,
Can save her for you, and who'll do it too.

NATHAN.

It was so once; but 'tis no longer so;
You come too late.

TEMPLAR.

How so? oh, how too late?

NATHAN.

Thanks to the Patriarch.

TEMPLAR.

Thanks to *him!* for what?
Was it *his* purpose e'er to earn our thanks?
Why thanks to him, forsooth?

NATHAN.

That now we know
Who are her kindred—to whose hands she now
May safely be surrendered.

TEMPLAR.

Nay, for that
Let him be thankful to the Patriarch
Who has more cause than I !¹

NATHAN.

Yet at the hands
Of these her kindred you must seek her now,
And not at mine.

TEMPLAR.

Poor Recha ! all things seem
To jump together only to your hurt ;
That which to any other orphan child
Had been a priceless blessing, is to you
A sheer calamity. But, Nathan, say,
Where are these precious new-found kinsfolk ?

NATHAN.

Where ?

TEMPLAR.

And what are they ?

NATHAN.

Well, as to what they are,
A brother in especial has been found,
To whom you must address your suit for her.

¹ See Note 53.

TEMPLAR.

A brother, say you? Well, and what is he,
A soldier or a priest? Oh, tell me quick
What I may hope from him.

NATHAN.

I rather think
That he is neither—or is both in one—
I scarcely know him yet.

TEMPLAR.

What more of him?

NATHAN.

I hear he is an honest man, with whom
Our Recha will do well.

TEMPLAR.

A Christian, too?

Nathan, at times you fairly puzzle me;
Be not offended, but you well may think
With Christians she must play the Christian,
And when she shall have played it long enough,
She'll end at last by being one in fact;
And then the tares will choke the precious wheat
Sown in her soul by you; and yet you seem
Quite unconcerned for that, and calmly say
She's sure to prosper 'neath her brother's care!

NATHAN.

Well, so I think at least, and so I hope;
If she should lack for aught beneath his care,
She'll still have you and me to think of her.

TEMPLAR.

What can she ever chance to lack with him?
The loving brother surely will provide
The darling sister with a goodly store
Of food and raiment, dainty things, and gauds;
And what more could she want, unless it be
A man to wed her? Well, well, even that
The loving brother in his own good time
Will surely find her, if he's to be found;
And then, the better Christian he is,
The better chance for him. Alack, my friend,
'Tis sad you've reared an angel such as this
To be perverted thus by other hands!

NATHAN.

Why these regrets? Our angel, be assured,
Will ever prove right worthy of our love.¹

TEMPLAR.

Speak not thus lightly of my love for her;
It ne'er can brook partition such as this
With e'er another—no, not e'en in name.
But tell me, has she any inkling yet
Of what awaits her?

NATHAN.

Possibly she has;
But whence the inkling came I cannot tell.

TEMPLAR.

Nay, nay, this is too much—she shall—she must
Learn first from me the tidings of her lot.

¹ See Note 54.

My resolution ne'er to see her more
Till I could call her mine, now melts away;
I'll haste me now —

NATHAN.

Haste whither?

TEMPLAR.

Unto her;

To see if haply in her maiden soul
There may be found sufficient man-like stuff
To make her yet adopt the sole resolve
That's worthy of her.

NATHAN.

What is that?

TEMPLAR.

'Tis this;

To snap her fingers at the pair of you;
You and her brother.

NATHAN.

And?

TEMPLAR.

To follow me;

E'en if in doing so she had to wed
A Moslem.

NATHAN.

Stay, she is no longer there;
She's now with Sittah, or with Saladin.

TEMPLAR.

Since when? and why?

NATHAN.

And if you'd like to meet
The brother there with them, then come with me.

TEMPLAR.

The brother? whose? Sittah's, or Recha's, which?

NATHAN.

Possibly both—but come, I pray you come.
(*He leads him away.*)

SCENE VI.—*Sittah's Boudoir.* SITTAH and RECHA in conversation.

SITTAH.

Oh, what delight you give me, darling child!
But be not agitated—be not shy;
Be gay and prattle freely—be at ease.

RECHA.

Princess——

SITTAH.

Not Princess—call me Sittah, dear;
Your friend, your sister, mother—what you will.
I well might be the last, you are so young,
And yet so wise—and good as you are wise;

You seem to know all things, and to have read
All that has e'er been writ.

RECHA.

Who? *I* indeed!
You surely mock your little silly friend;
I scarce can read.

SITTAH.

Nay, that's a little fib.

RECHA.

Well, I can spell out what my father pens;
At least a little—but I thought you spoke
Of real books.

SITTAH.

Yes, dear, I spoke of books.

RECHA.

Well, I can scarcely read a book at all.

SITTAH.

What?—are you serious?

RECHA.

Quite—my father says
Frigid book-learning's but a sorry thing,
Whose lifeless symbols speak not to the heart.

SITTAH.

Ha ! saith he so ? Methinks he's not far wrong.
How came you, then, to learn the many things
You seem to know ?

RECHA.

I learnt them from his lips ;
And I could almost tell you even now
Where, how, and why he mostly taught me them.

SITTAH.

Things taught like this dwell longest in the mind,
For then the whole soul learns.

RECHA.

And as for books,
I judge you too have read but few or none.

SITTAH.

How so ? I cannot boast me of my lore,
But state your grounds—and boldly—come, your
grounds.

RECHA.

Because you are so natural, so fresh,
So free from artifice,—so like yourself.

SITTAH.

And what of that ?

RECHA.

My father says that books
Too seldom leave us so.

SITTAH

Your father seems
To be a wondrous man.

RECHA.

Ay, that he is.

SITTAH.

How close he ever shoots unto the mark !

RECHA

He does—and then to think——

SITTAH.

What ails you, dear ?

RECHA

To think that I must lose——

SITTAH.

My God, you weep !

RECHA.

That I must lose—ay, it must out, or else
My heart would burst—to think that I must lose
A father such as that !

(She falls, sobbing, at the feet of SITTAH.)

SITTAH.

What ! lose him ! how ?
Be calm—you shall not lose him—rise, my child.

RECHA.

Then not in vain you'll have become to me
A sister and a friend.

SITTAH.

Be sure I'm both.
But rise, my child, or I must call for help.

RECHA (*controlling herself, and rising*).

Forgive me! anguish caused me to forget
With whom I speak—oh no, despairing tears
Are not required to move a Sittah's heart;
Calm reason is enough for souls like hers;
With Sittah reason's cause is sure to win.

SITTAH.

Well, tell your tale.

RECHA.

My sister and my friend,
Oh, never never let them force on me
Another father—oh, permit it not!

SITTAH.

What! force another father upon you!
Who can do that, or wish to do it, dear?

RECHA.

Who? Why my own good wicked Daya can;
Ay, she can wish it and can do it too;
You know her not—at once so good and bad;

May God forgive her, and reward her too;
She's been so kind to me, and yet she's been
Oh, so unkind as well!

SITTAH.

Unkind to *you*?
Then of a truth there's little good in her.

RECHA.

Oh yes, there is, and much.

SITTAH.

Who is she, then?

RECHA.

A Christian, who when I was but a babe
Was nurse to me, and oh, you cannot think
How tenderly she filled a mother's place,
And caused me to forget my orphan state!
May God requite her! Yet with all her love,
She oft has tortured me.

SITTAH.

But how and why?

RECHA.

The dear good woman, I must tell you plain,
Is one of those good simple Christian souls
Who from sheer love must torture those they love;
One of those kindly fanatics who think
They only know the strait and narrow way,
The one true way to God.

SITTAH.

Ah, now I see.

RECHA.

Who feel impelled to force upon that way
All who may chance to tread another track;
And scarce could they do else, for if 'tis true
That *their* way only leads to lasting bliss,
How could they calmly see their friends pursue
Another path which, as they are convinced,
Can only lead us to eternal woe?
Else it were possible to love and hate
The self-same person at the self-same time.
No, 'tis not that which now at last has roused
These loud complaints against her. All her sighs,
Her warnings, her entreaties, and her threats,
I could have borne with patience to the end;
These only led me ever unto thoughts
Which were both good and profitable too;
And it is flattering to us to feel
That any fellow-creature loves us so
As to be tortured by the very thought
Of losing us for all eternity.

SITTAH.

Ay, that is true.

RECHA.

But now she's gone too far;
Nothing can palliate her last offence;
All patience, all reflection, fail me now;
'Tis past all bearing!

SITTAH.

What was this offence?

RECHA.

Well, a disclosure she professed to make
This very day.

SITTAH.

That's strange—this very day!

RECHA.

On our way hither, just as we approached
A ruined Christian temple, all at once
She stopped, and seemed to struggle with herself;
With tearful eyes she first looked up to heaven,
And then she gazed on me; at last she said—
Come, let us take the path which leads direct
Through this old ruined fane; with that she went;
I followed, and I shuddered as I viewed
The mouldering relics which bestrewed the spot;
Again she halted, and I stood with her
Hard by a crumbling altar's sunken steps;
Then judge of my surprise when all at once,
Wringing her hands, and shedding scalding tears,
She fell before my feet.

SITTAH.

My precious child!

RECHA.

And by the holy Virgin, who of yore
Had heard so many a prayer before that shrine,

And there had wrought so many a miracle,
With looks of deepest sympathy and love,
She prayed me to have pity on myself;
Or at the least to pardon her if now
She told me of her church's claims on me.

SITTAH (*to herself*).

Alas, I feared as much!

RECHA.

She said I was
Of Christian blood, had duly been baptised,
And was no child of Nathan's. Ay, she said
Nathan was *not* my father—oh, my God,
To think he is not that!—ah, Sittah, now
I cast me once more prostrate at your feet!

SITTAH.

Nay, Recha, rise—see there, my brother comes!

SCENE VII.—SALADIN *and the Preceding*.

SALADIN.

Sittah, what's this?

SITTAH.

She seems beside herself!

SALADIN.

Who is she?

SITTAH.

Sure, you know.

SALADIN.

What, Nathan's child?

What ails her?

SITTAH.

Child, arise, 'tis Saladin.

RECHA (*who, still kneeling and with bowed head, has crept to the Sultan's feet*).

No, I will not arise—I ne'er will look
Upon the Sultan's face, or contemplate
The image of eternal rectitude
And goodness in his eyes and on his front,
Until he promise first——

SITTAH.

Arise, arise!

RECHA.

Not till he promise——

SALADIN.

Well, I promise it,

Whate'er it be.

RECHA.

'Tis neither more nor less
Than that he'll let my father bide with me,
And me with him. As yet I do not know

Who else it is who possibly can wish
To fill his place—nor do I seek to know—
Are fathers haply made by blood alone?

SALADIN (*raising her*).

I see it all—who could so cruel be
To breathe the thought so rashly in your breast?
But is the thing established, fully proved?

RECHA.

It must be so indeed, for Daya says
She had it from my nurse.

SALADIN.

Your nurse, say you?

RECHA.

Who in her dying moments felt constrained
To trust the secret unto Daya's ear.

SALADIN.

Dying indeed!—perhaps delirious too.
And even were it true, still, as you've said,
Blood is not all that makes paternity;
Not even 'mid the brutes—it gives, at most,
The prior right to earn the sacred name—
So then cheer up; and if a brace of sires
Now wrangle for you, leave them in the lurch,
And take a third—take *me* to be your sire.

SITTAH,

Oh, do—oh, do!

SALADIN.

I'll prove a good one too;
A right good sire to you—or, better still,
What do you want with fathers after all?
They die so soon—best look around betimes
For one who'll match you in the race of life.
Know you none such?

SITTAH.

Oh, do not make her blush.

SALADIN.

Nay, it was my intention to do that;
Blushes make even homely features fair,
How could they fail to make the fair more fair?
I've bid your father Nathan join us here,
And with him I have bid another come,—
With Sittah's kind permission—can you guess
Who that may be?

SITTAH.

Oh, brother!

SALADIN.

When he comes,
Blush before *him*, dear maiden, if you like,

RECHA.

Blush!—before whom?

SALADIN.

You little hypocrite!
Turn pale, then, if you like—just as you please,
And as you can.

(*A female slave enters and approaches SITTAH.*)

What,—come they even now?

SITTAH.

'Tis they, my brother—bid them come within.

LAST SCENE.—NATHAN, *the* TEMPLAR, *and the* Preceding.

SALADIN.

Welcome, my worthy friends!—and first of all,
Let me now tell you, Nathan, you can send
As soon as e'er you please to fetch your gold.

NATHAN.

What mean you, Sultan?

SALADIN.

That 'tis now *my* turn
To be of use to *you*.

NATHAN.

What mean you, sire?

SALADIN.

The caravan is come, and now again
I'm richer than I've been this many a day;

So tell me what you need, to undertake
Some right grand stroke of trade; for, like ourselves,
You merchant folk can never have too much
Of ready cash.

NATHAN.

But wherefore mention first
A trifle such as this? I yonder see
An eye in tears, which it concerns me more,
Far more, to dry. My Recha, why these tears?
What ails you—are you not my daughter still?

RECHA.

My father——

NATHAN.

'Tis enough—we understand—
Be cheerful, and be calm. Oh, may your heart
Be still your own, and may no other loss
Threaten its peace!—your father still remains
Unlost to you.

RECHA.

I fear no other loss.

TEMPLAR.

No other loss!—then, sure, I've been deceived;
What we fear not to lose we've ne'er believed
To have possessed, nor ever wished to have.
Well, be it so—Nathan, this changes all—
Sultan, 'twas at your bidding that I came;
But I've misled you—think no more of me.

SALADIN.

How! so precipitate again, young man?
Must all anticipate your lightest thought,
Your every wish?

TEMPLAR.

Sultan, you've heard and seen!

SALADIN.

Ay, truly—pity you were not more sure
Of how you stood.

TEMPLAR.

Well, *now* I'm sure of it.

SALADIN.

He who presumes e'en on a worthy deed
Thereby revokes it. She whose life you saved
Does not by that become your property;
Or else the robber, whom the greed of gain
Impels into the fire, would be as much
A hero as yourself——

(Advancing to RECHA, and addressing her.)

But come, my girl,
Be not too hard with him; for were he else,
Were he less hot and hasty than he is,
Perhaps he never would have saved your life.
Then weigh the good in him against the bad;
Put him to shame—do what *he* ought to do;
Confess you love him—offer him yourself;
He dare not slight you; no, nor e'er forget
How infinitely more by such a step

You do for him than e'er he did for you ;
For, after all, what *was* it that he did ?
Let himself be a little smirched by smoke !
A mighty matter !—he could do no less ;
Else he has nought of Assad in his soul,
And wears his mask alone and not his heart ;
Come, maiden, come.

(He seeks to lead her to the TEMPLAR'S side.)

SITTAH.

Ay, go—'twere not too much
By way of gratitude for that he did ;
It scarcely were enough.

NATHAN.

Hold, Saladin,
And Sittah, hold !

SALADIN.

What, you too, Nathan, now !

NATHAN.

Ay, Sultan, here I must put in a word.

SALADIN.

Well, Nathan, who denies your right to speak ?
A foster-father such as you have been
Right well deserves a voice ; nay, if you will,
More than we all—but let me tell you now ;
I know exactly how the matter stands.

NATHAN.

Not quite, methinks—I speak not of myself,
But of another, a far other man,
Who, Saladin, must be consulted first.

SALADIN.

And who is he?

NATHAN.

Her brother.

SALADIN.

Recha's?

NATHAN.

Ay.

RECHA.

My brother! have I then a brother?

TEMPLAR (*starting out of a moody abstraction*).

Where,
Where is this brother? not yet here?—'twas said
That I should meet him here.

NATHAN.

And so you shall.

TEMPLAR (*bitterly*).

He's fixed a father on her—can he not
Fish up a brother too?

SALADIN.

This is too much !

A thought so base as this could ne'er have passed
My Assad's lips—it does you credit, sir.

NATHAN.

Forgive him, Sultan, as I gladly do ;
Who knows what haply might have been our thought
If tried like him, and at an age like his ?

(To the TEMPLAR, kindly.)

Sir knight, I do not blame you, for mistrust
Begets suspicion—'tis a pity now
You did not plainly tell me at the first
Your real name.

TEMPLAR.

How !

NATHAN.

Stauffen's not your name.

TEMPLAR.

What is it, then ?

NATHAN.

Not Curd von Stauffen, sir.

TEMPLAR.

Then what's my name ?

NATHAN.

Von Filneck is your name ;

Leo von Filneck.

TEMPLAR.

How is that ?

NATHAN.

You start ?

TEMPLAR.

I may well start—who says so ?

NATHAN.

I myself ;
And I can tell you more—but do not think
I tax you with untruth—it well might be
That either name might fit you equally.

TEMPLAR.

'Twas my own thought—God bade him utter it !

NATHAN.

Ay, for your mother was a Stauffen, sir ;
Her brother, that's your uncle, brought you up ;
Your parents left you in his German home
When, driven by the rigorous climate thence,
Themselves came back again to Palestine.
His name was Curd von Stauffen, and belike
In childhood he may have adopted you.
Now tell me when it was you landed here
Along with him ; and haply lives he still ?

TEMPLAR.

What shall I say? Oh, Nathan, sure you're right!
My uncle's dead—for me, I only came
With the last draft which sailed to reinforce
Our Order's ranks—but oh, I pray you say
What have these circumstances got to do
With Recha's new-found brother?

NATHAN.

Well, your sire——

TEMPLAR.

What!—did you know *him* too?

NATHAN.

He was my friend.

TEMPLAR.

Your friend!—is't possible?

NATHAN.

He called himself
Von Filneck—Wolf von Filneck—yet by race
He was no German.

TEMPLAR.

Know you that as well?

NATHAN.

He was but wedded to a German wife,
And went with her for but a little space
To Germany.

TEMPLAR.

Enough—come, say at once,
Who is our Recha's brother?

NATHAN.

You are he!

TEMPLAR.

What!—*I* her brother!

RECHA.

He my brother—oh!

SITTAH.

Brother and sister?

SALADIN.

Is it possible?

RECHA (*making to approach the* TEMPLAR).

Ah, brother!

TEMPLAR (*stepping back*).

I your brother?

RECHA (*stopping, and turning to* NATHAN).

Nay, alas
It cannot be—his heart knows nought of it!
My God, we're but deceivers!

SALADIN.

How is this?

You a deceiver!—never think it, girl.

(To the TEMPLAR.)

You're the deceiver!—everything in you
 Seems simulated—face, and voice, and gait—
 Nothing is yours—and now you will not own
 A sister such as this!—hence from my sight!

TEMPLAR *(approaching him with humility)*.

Sultan, misconstrue not my sheer surprise;
 Misjudge not either Assad or myself
 At such a moment—sure, you never saw
 Your Assad in so strange a plight as this.

(Turning to NATHAN.)

Nathan, you rob me, but enrich me too;
 Both in full measure—but you give me more,
 Far more than that which you have ta'en away;

(Clasping RECHA in his arms.)

My sister, oh my sister!

NATHAN.

Call her now

Blanda von Filneck.

TEMPLAR.

Blanda, must it be?
 And Recha now no more?—you cast her off;
 And call her by her Frankish name once more;
 And all for me—oh, Nathan, wherefore thus
 Make *her* a sufferer on my account?

NATHAN.

What mean you?—you are *both* my children now;
For sure my daughter's brother is my child
As well as she, as soon as e'er he will.

*(While he yields himself to their embraces
SALADIN approaches his sister with an
expression of astonishment and perplexity.)*

SALADIN.

What think you, Sittah?

SITTAH.

'Tis a moving scene.

SALADIN.

And as for me, I almost now recoil
From telling you a thing more moving still,
For which you must prepare as best you may.

SITTAH.

Oh, what is this?

SALADIN.

Nathan, a word with you.

*(While SALADIN and NATHAN speak together in
suppressed tones, SITTAH approaches the
TEMPLAR and RECHA with expressions of
sympathy and tenderness.)*

You said her father was no German born;
Know you, then, what he was, and whence he came?

NATHAN.

That he himself would ne'er confide to me;
He never breathed a word upon the point.

SALADIN.

Was he a Frank at all—a western man?

NATHAN.

He ever freely owned he was not that;
His speech was Persian.

SALADIN.

Persian, do you say?
What more do I require?—'twas he, 'twas he!

NATHAN.

Whom mean you?

SALADIN.

'Tis my brother whom I mean;
'Twas he for sure. My Assad was the man!

NATHAN.

Well, since you thus have hit on it yourself,
Behold its confirmation in this book!

(Handing him the LAY BROTHER'S breviary.)

SALADIN *(eagerly opening it)*.

Ah! 'tis his hand—that, too, I recognise!

NATHAN.

As yet they know it not—it rests with you,
With you alone, to tell them all the truth.

SALADIN (*while examining the volume*).

What! think you, Nathan, I shall fail to claim
My brother's children—fail to claim my niece;
My nephew too? What, fail to claim my own!
Think you I'm like to hand them o'er to you?

(*Aloud, to the group.*)

Ho, Sittah, they're my own—they are, they are!
They both are mine—our Assad's children both!
(*He hastens to embrace them.*)

SITTAH (*following him*).

Ay, who can doubt it? they are ours indeed!

SALADIN (*to the TEMPLAR*).

Now, stubborn boy, you're *bound* to love me—bound!
(*To RECHA.*)

And now I am your father for a fact,
Whether you will or no!

SITTAH.

And you're my child!

SALADIN (*again to the TEMPLAR*).

My son!—my Assad!—oh, my Assad's son!

TEMPLAR.

Then am I of your blood? if that be so,
The tales with which they lulled my infancy
Were more than idle dreams!

(He falls at SALADIN'S feet.)

SALADIN *(raising him)*.

Hark to the rogue!

He knew about it all along, and yet
He was within an ace of making me
His murderer,—by Heaven!—his murderer!

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NOTES.

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NOTES.

IN almost every instance where the present translator has differed from previous translators in essential points of interpretation, or has characterised their versions as erroneous, he has done so on the authority of the eminent commentator Düntzer, or of Professor Buchheim, or of German critical scholars, resident in Germany, whom he has specially consulted in view to the attainment of strict accuracy in regard to the passages or points in question.

NOTE 1. AUTHOR'S MOTTO.

Introite, nam et heic Dii sunt !
(Enter, for here too are gods.)

Professor Buchheim has called attention to the curious accident by which these words, which Lessing prefixed as a motto to this drama, were erroneously ascribed to Aulus Gellius. In point of fact, they do not occur anywhere in the works of that writer. The sentiment—expressed in Greek—is to be found in Aristotle (*De Part. An.*, 1-5); and it would seem that by a strange chance it crept, in its present Latin form, into the preface of Aulus Gellius to his *Noctes Atticæ* by an apparently accidental interpolation on the part of Phil. Beroaldus in his edition of that work (Bologna, 1503). The point is more curious than important.

NOTE 2. PAGE 3.

The name *Daya* is an Arabic and Persian word signifying a nurse or foster-mother; equivalent to the Greek τροφός, applied

in the *Odyssey* to Euryclea, the nurse of Ulysses. The same word, under various modifications, but with the same meaning, is current at the present day in most of the vernacular languages of India.

NOTE 3. PAGE 8.

'Twas a young Templar who, some days before,
Spared by the clemency of Saladin,
Had been brought hither as a captive——

The word Saladin is a corruption of the Arabic Saláh-ood-Deen—or Integrity of the Faith—one of the many titles of Yussuf Ibn Ayub, the famous Sultan of Egypt and Syria, the Moslem hero of the third crusade, and the mirror of Mahomedan chivalry. According to etymology, the word Saladin ought obviously to have the stress on the second syllable; and in all probability it was originally pronounced Saládin, but, with the characteristic tendency of English pronunciation to throw the stress on the early part of each word, it is now generally pronounced Sáladin.

NOTE 4. PAGE 14.

Whom would you flatter now;
The angel or yourself?

This expression on the part of Recha is explained by the supposition that she not only believed herself to be the daughter of Nathan, but also imagined that she closely resembled him in personal appearance.

NOTE 5. PAGE 15.

To me the greatest miracle is this, etc.

The passage commencing with this line and ending with the words "out of Nature's course," presents difficulty to some

readers; yet, although somewhat condensed, its meaning is sufficiently plain. Nathan is endeavouring to dispel the illusion by which Recha is possessed, to the effect that her rescue from the burning house was not effected by the Templar or by any other mere human agency, but was due to the miraculous interposition of a veritable angel. In his efforts to do this he not only points out to her that it might almost be regarded as a miracle that the Templar should have been spared by Saladin, usually so relentless to all prisoners belonging to that Order, but he also propounds a general reflection on the subject, to the following effect. He contends that we are at all times surrounded by wondrous natural phenomena, which might well be regarded as miracles but for the fact that their habitual recurrence renders us familiar with them, and causes us to cease to wonder at them. Thus, for example, such things as the daily rising and setting of the sun; the development of a seed into a tree, and the like, strictly regarded, should be held to be miraculous, and probably would be so regarded by any one observing them for the first time; but that such phenomena "by use and wont grow stale and commonplace." Were it not for this fact, he argues, these and similar occurrences would continue to be considered miraculous; and the name of miracle would not by thinking men be confined exclusively to those supposed supernatural occurrences, or suspensions of the laws of nature, which alone excite the wonder of fools and children.

NOTE 6. PAGE 16.

Or tender for his life
More than the leathern girdle of his sword,
His dagger at the most.

By the rules of their Order the Templars were not permitted to offer for their ransom anything beyond their sword-belts or their daggers; a regulation which practically amounted to the prohibition of any offer of ransom at all. Düntzer objects to this passage that the Templars did not wear leathern belts,

but girdles of white linen as an emblem of their purity. Even if this be so, the objection seems unimportant.

NOTE 7. PAGE 18.

Look you,—a forehead with a certain arch.

This and the following six lines merely refer to the casual occurrence on the Templar's face of such and such features, in which Saladin fortunately found or fancied a resemblance to his own long-lost brother, and thus led him to spare the life of the knight, whereby the latter was enabled to rescue Recha from the flames.

Nathan characterises the countenance of the Templar as "a barbarous European face" because in that age the orientals regarded the inhabitants of Western Europe as uncivilised in comparison with themselves.

NOTE 8. PAGE 24.

Al Hafi is, strictly speaking, an Arabic adjective signifying the bare-foot, or the bare-footed one; an epithet peculiarly appropriate to a Dervish or wandering mendicant. Düntzer entirely misapprehends the meaning of the word, and, by a strange confusion, seems to connect it with the totally unrelated Arabic word *Hafiz*, which means a religionist who knows by heart the principal passages of the Koran.

NOTE 9. PAGE 29.

Al Hafi, minister of Saladin.

The word in the original, here translated *minister*, is *Defterdar*—more properly *Dufterdar*—a Persian and Arabic term meaning, primarily, a record-keeper, and, secondarily, an intendant of finance—a treasurer—from *Dufter*, a book, roll, or register.

NOTE 10. PAGE 32.

By thousands to oppress and crush mankind,
Rob them, destroy them, torture them, yet play
The philanthrope to individual men.

This rendering of this passage is adopted on the authority of Professor Buchheim, although in opposition to the opinion of Düntzer. But inasmuch as the view taken of it by the latter commentator results in a greatly less effective version, the present translator feels fully warranted by the great reputation of Dr. Buchheim in preferring the interpretation here presented.

NOTE 11. PAGE 38.

Well, I'm a Templar, and a prisoner,
Taken at Tebnin.

Tebnin was a fortress in the neighbourhood of Tyre, where the Templars suffered a defeat at the hands of the Saracens in the year 1187.

NOTE 12. PAGE 42.

It is intended for King Philip's hands.

The reference here is of course to Philip II. of France, commonly called Philip Augustus; but it should be observed that prior to the action figured in this play that monarch had quitted the Holy Land.

NOTE 13. PAGE 48.

As Persia, Syria, and far Cathay
Alone can furnish forth.

The word *Sina* here used in the original of course means China, being drawn from an Arabic form of the name of that country. Yet a recent translator, strange to say, renders it Sinai!

NOTE 14. PAGE 49.

But then how soon
Such moments melt away !

This is merely a sneering implication on the part of the Templar that the enthusiastic gratitude of the Jew would soon evaporate.

NOTE 15. PAGE 49.

By birth a Swiss,
Who had at once the honour and the joy
Of choking in the self-same puny stream
With his Imperial Majesty himself.

In this passage the allusion is to the death of the Emperor Frederick I. of Germany, commonly called Barbarossa, who, in attempting to cross the insignificant river Calycadnus in Pisidia, one of the ancient divisions of Asia Minor, was drowned on the 10th of June 1190.

It should be stated, however, that according to some authorities, Barbarossa died of fever contracted from bathing in the Orontes.

NOTE 16. PAGE 53.

But now
My pawn will *fork*.

The German phrase here translated *fork*, as well as that a little lower down translated *discovered check*, are technical terms well known to chess-players; and they are here adopted on the strength of the opinion of Professor Buchheim, who cites in support of his opinion no less authority than that of the eminent chess-player Dr. Zukertort. It appears that the usual translation of *Abschach*, at line 45 of this scene, as *double*

check, is erroneous and untenable; and that the phrase really means what English chess-players call *discovered check*.

NOTE 17. PAGE 54.

The *Dinar* was a small Arabian gold coin, worth about eight shillings of our money. The *Naserin*—German diminutive *Naserinchen*—was a minute coin worth about a farthing. Its name was derived from that of the Caliph Naser.

NOTE 18. PAGE 55.

Nay, nay, you've taught me better, Saladin,
The courtesy that's ever due to queens.

This is probably an allusion to the historic generosity which Saladin practised towards the sister of Saleh, son of the Sultan Noor-ood-Deen, who had been vanquished by Saladin, as well as to his well-known courtesy towards Sibylla, wife of Guy de Lusignan, Maria, spouse of Prince Balian II., and other princesses.

NOTE 19. PAGE 57.

Or did they fancy that I meant to play
With the Imaum?

This passage very certainly stands in need of elucidation. It is usually baldly rendered word for word as it stands in the original: "Was it with Iman that I've played?" which affords the reader no clue to the allusion obviously intended, and indeed presents no sense at all; while it seems to assume that *Iman* was the name of some special individual. But this is scarcely translation.

The word *Iman* in the original is not a personal name at all, but is a heteroclite, if not a positively erroneous, form of

Imaum, an Arabic word signifying the Mahomedan priest presiding in a mosque. As is well known, Mahomed, closely following the Mosaic injunction now embodied in our Second Commandment, stringently prohibited his followers not only from making any graven images, but from making anything in the likeness of any organic object whatsoever. The use of such things by devout Mahomedans was rigorously forbidden; and it may be observed that no such figures are ever to be seen in the decorations of Mahomedan churches or other buildings, or in the synagogues of the Jews. In course of time this prohibition, like many others in the Prophet's code, came to be disregarded by the great body of his lay followers; but it still continued, and perhaps still continues, to be rigidly obeyed by the Mahomedan priesthood. Hence it followed that no priest, and still less the presiding priest of a mosque, permitted himself to use chess men carved in the semblance of any special object; the pieces used by the Mahomedan priesthood being required to be absolutely plain. In the passage here under consideration Saladin is represented as endeavouring half jocularly to account for his loss of the game of chess to Sittah. Among other excuses, he seeks to throw the blame on the pieces which have been supplied to him by his attendants, which appear to have been plain ones, destitute of ornament, and he exclaims—

Why do they ever give us this plain set
Of formless pieces, representing nought,
And barren of suggestion to the mind?

And then he adds, as if to account for their having done so, and as if to accentuate the unsuitability of such pieces for his purpose—

Or did they fancy that I meant to play
With the Imaum?

who of course could use no other but plain pieces representing no figures. It appears to the present translator that without this explanation the meaning of this passage could not be properly apprehended.

In this and the following lines, constituting the first part of this scene, we find Al Hafi on the brink of betraying to Saladin the generous self-denial of Sittah, which has prompted her for long not only to forego the sums which she has at various times won at chess from her brother, while leaving him to suppose that she has received them, but also to surrender her fixed allowance and all other personal resources at her command, and to leave or place them in Al Hafi's hands, in order to relieve the struggling exchequer of the Sultan.

The Dervish is ever on the point of divulging the matter; while Sittah, from motives of honourable delicacy, is in an agony of apprehension lest he should do so, and does all in her power to prevent her brother from surprising her honourable secret. Thus she implores Al Hafi at least to *say*, that is, to pretend, that she will get the gold, and to make believe at least that she may send to fetch it; until at last, provoked by Saladin's obstinate determination to lose the game, the Dervish blurts out that the Sultan's play is on a par with his payment of his losses, both alike a sham; which shortly leads to the discovery of Sittah's generosity.

Some persons appear to have completely missed the point of some of the expressions used in this episode; as, for example, where they render line 24 of this scene, "Do say that I may send to fetch the gold," as if she really desired to get it; whereas her meaning really is that she wishes the Dervish to say *to Saladin* that she is welcome to send for it; and this merely with the view of preventing the Sultan's discovery of her secret. Also, line 42 of this scene is generally quite incorrectly rendered as "small pains, small gains;" a version which obviously loses sight of the intention of Al Hafi's words, which in point of fact are meant to imply that Saladin's play is as unreal and as much a sham as is his payment of his sister's gains.

NOTE 24. PAGE 68.

Downright embezzlement
Had been a safer thing to venture on.

It is somewhat strange that in this passage the original German word *Unterschleif*, which means *embezzlement* only, or *fraud*, should by some translators have been rendered *deficits*; a rendering not only erroneous, but involving a serious sacrifice of the sense of the passage.

NOTE 25. PAGE 85.

The knot must not look down upon the gnarl.

Here Nathan, carrying out his comparison of men with trees, compares ordinary and insignificant persons to the worthless portions of timber; the knots and gnarls which, as well as the "topmost twigs," must not presume to be arrogant, and to look down upon each other.

NOTE 26. PAGE 85.

Where has it shown itself in blacker form
Than here and now?

This entire passage is a vehement denunciation by the Templar of all bigoted and fanatical propagandism, whether on the part of Christian, Mahomedan, or Jew; and in the lines above cited he specially refers to the crusades, which expeditions Lessing had already, in his *Dramaturgie*, characterised as being, in his opinion, "the most inhuman persecutions of which Christian superstition was ever guilty."

NOTE 27. PAGE 98.

Among my patrons on the Ganges' banks
I need do neither.

Most translators render the word *Geber* in this passage as *Ghebers*, or *Guebres*, that is to say, Fire-worshippers, or followers of Zoroaster. This would seem to point to grave misapprehension somewhere; and this for two reasons. In the first place,

on the banks of the Ganges there are no Guebres, and, so far as is known, never were. In the second place, even if it be contended that poets may put Guebres where they please, on the time-honoured principle that

Pictoribus atque poetis
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit equa potestas,

yet even poets may not talk nonsense; and it would be sheer nonsense to make an orthodox Mahomedan like Al Hafi speak with affectionate veneration of "*his Guebres*," since Guebres are, and always have been, an abomination to Mahomedans.

It might seem probable that the word originally employed by Lessing was merely the simple word *Geber*, a giver or donor; and that Al Hafi merely refers to those bounteous persons dwelling on the banks of the Ganges who would be likely to bestow alms upon him—his patrons, in short, or benefactors. It appears, however, that in all the earlier editions of this play the word used in this passage is *Gheber*, which means Guebre, and can mean nothing else; and that Lessing purposely, however erroneously, used it in ignorance of the double objection to it cited above. Nevertheless, since all the later editions of the play print the word *Geber*, it may be presumed that the original error on the part of Lessing has since been detected, and corrected by the simple omission of the letter *h* in the word; and as it seems undesirable to perpetuate an absurdity, the present translator feels fully warranted in translating the word, not as it may have appeared in early editions, but as it now stands before him, and he has therefore rendered it as *patrons*.

Some authorities, and among them is the commentator Düntzer himself, have endeavoured to combat one of the objections above mentioned by maintaining that Al Hafi was himself a Guebre. This is absolutely untenable. That he was a Mahomedan is indisputable; the name is essentially that of a Mussulman; a Dervish is essentially a Mahomedan mendicant; he is attached to the court of Saladin, which no Fire-worshipper could ever be; and in the third scene of the first act, he swears by the Prophet, which no Fire-worshipper would ever

do. Finally, even were this objection successfully combated, the other, and the more important one, would still remain.

NOTE 28. PAGE 98.

And I'll provide you with a pilgrim's frock.

By a strange and unaccountable error some translators render the word here correctly translated *frock* as *staff*. The word in the original is *Delk*. Now *Delk*, or more accurately *Dalk*, is simply an old Persian word which signifies a pilgrim's frock, and nothing else. This blunder is the more remarkable and inexcusable inasmuch as Lessing himself, in writing to his brother, thinks it worth while to emphasise the true meaning of the word.

NOTE 29. PAGE 107.

Why seek to hide
That which your fitful features speak so plain?

In this passage the Templar does not imply that Recha's looks betray love for him, as translators so generally, but erroneously, represent. He merely refers to her beauty both of form and character, which had been intimated to him in glowing terms by Nathan.

NOTE 30. PAGE 110.

How such a sudden tempest in my breast
Should be succeeded by this sudden calm.

In this passage, as well as in certain lines which follow a little farther on, the poet seems to wish to mitigate the undoubted unpleasantness of a situation where brother and sister, albeit unconscious of their relationship, occupy even temporarily the position of lovers. It will be observed that as soon as Recha has obtained her wish to see the Templar, and had

thanked him for his rescue of her, her feeling towards him calms down, in a manner unaccountable even to herself, and she entertains no thought of erotic love towards him.

NOTE 31. PAGE 123.

Well then.—In hoar antiquity there dwelt
In eastern lands a man who had received
From a loved hand a ring of priceless worth.—*Sgg.*

The famous apologue of the three rings is avowedly drawn from the Decameron of Boccaccio, *Giornata Prima, Novella iii.*; and, indeed, as stated in the Introduction, the character of Nathan himself is founded on that of the Jew Melchisedec in the same tale.

It has been supposed that Boccaccio found the outline of the story in a romance called *Fortunatus Siculus*, by Busone da Gubbio, who in turn had himself drawn it from the well-known collection of tales entitled the *Cento Novelle Antiche*. Professor Bartoli, indeed, has traced the episode to the Hebrew historical collection called *Shêbet Jahuda*, from which it would seem to have found its way into the *Gesta Romanorum*, and thence to the *Cento Novelle*. It may be added that a somewhat similar idea is embodied in the ancient Roman story of Numa and the *Twelve Ancilla*.

It is some satisfaction to note that the apologue itself declares that one of the rings—and one only—was true and genuine; while the other two were spurious imitations. Thus the Christian can enjoy the assurance that the story involves no necessary imputation on the verity of his own creed.

NOTE 32. PAGE 133.

In the Promised Land,
Land therefore ever to be praised by me,
I've laid aside full many a prejudice.

In these lines, as has been observed by the commentators, there is a sort of play on the word *gelobt* in the original. In the first clause of the passage it is the participle of the verb *geloben*, to promise, and it of course means the promised land in the biblical sense. In the second clause it is the participle of the verb *loben*, to praise, and the Templar implies that it must ever be praised by him because in it he had "laid aside full many a prejudice." This play upon the two words necessarily evaporates in translation.

NOTE 33. PAGE 133.

And 'tis a better one,
More fitted for my father's native skies.

In case of possible misconstruction it should here be noted that this rendering is the true and only possible interpretation of the sense of the original. Most translators have strangely misconceived the meaning of the words *väterlichen Himmel*, which they render variously, but quite erroneously, as "*my paternal home above*," "*my father's heavenly home*," and the like. This makes absolute nonsense; and the mistake has arisen from supposing the word *Himmel* here to mean heaven. Now this word, like *cælum* in Latin, *ciel* in French, and even the Greek *οὐρανός*, as in *Herodotus* i. 142, means not only heaven, but also a particular climate, hence the quarter of the world where such a climate prevails, and hence, lastly, any particular region, zone, or country. The English *sky*, especially in the plural, is sometimes used in the same sense, and *clime* is almost interchangeable with *region*.

The meaning of the present passage is this. Tales and rumours heard in his infancy have given rise in the Templar's mind to a shadowy and dim suspicion of his father's eastern origin, and of his disregard of the barriers of creed in his adoption of a wife; and now, while meditating on the change which the alchemy of love is rapidly working on his own character and sentiments, and specially on his growing emancipation from the prejudices of his western training, and his

readiness to set at nought the obstacles which creed and custom have interposed between him and his beloved, the Templar characterises his new-born liberality of thought as being more in harmony with the probable character and sentiments of his eastern father, and more in conformity with his presumed principles—"more fitted for my father's native skies."

NOTE 34. PAGE 136.

When the two passions waited but your nod
To melt in one?

In this passage most translators erroneously suppose the word *beide*, both, to refer to the Templar and Recha. This is entirely mistaken. It refers to the two sentiments of gratitude and love, which the Templar here declares were on the point of melting or combining into one—that is, into love alone.

NOTE 35. PAGE 136.

Young Templar, you are too precipitate.

The expression *Ihr überrascht mich* in this line is generally translated, *you surprise me*. But this is not the true sense of the words in this passage. Nathan was not, and could not be, surprised at the Templar's passion for Recha, which he had already plainly perceived, and had actually desired to see. What he means is that the knight is going too fast, and that his love cannot be approved or accepted until the mystery is cleared up concerning his birth, as is made apparent by Nathan's very next remark.

NOTE 36. PAGE 138.

A fig for sneers at bastards and the like ;
The stock, I trow, is not to be despised.

Compare *King Lear*, Act I., Scene ii.—the soliloquy of Edmund.

Why bastard? Wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
As honest madam's issue?—*Sqq.*

NOTE 37. PAGE 142.

If I but substitute
For Saviour, Providence, she's right enough.

Some hold that this passage indicates that the Templar is, or has become, an unbeliever in Christianity. This seems an erroneous conception. In point of fact, the expression merely indicates that the knight, who still imagines Recha to be a Jewess, and who applies to her position the remark just uttered by Daya, thinks it inappropriate to talk of the intervention of the Saviour in her case, and would therefore substitute the word Providence.

NOTE 38. PAGE 142.

But, oh, this is the land
Of miracles.

Daya characterises the Holy Land as the land of miracles not only for obvious biblical reasons, but also as a prelude to the announcement which she is about to make; and as appropriate to her belief that the Templar is the chosen instrument of God for the salvation of Recha.

NOTE 39. PAGE 152.

See, by a happy chance he comes himself.

As stated in the Introduction, Lessing, in his impersonation of the Patriarch, had in view the notorious Heraclius of Auvergne,

who, as Patriarch of Jerusalem, proved himself a scandal alike to his church and to humanity. Historians have called him "the infamous Heraclius"; and Lessing himself has recorded his regret that in this play he has failed to make him appear nearly as wicked as he was.

In strict historical accuracy the Patriarch could not, of course, have been residing at Jerusalem at the time figured in the action of the play, since, when Saladin occupied that city, all the Christians who had been dwelling there were obliged to leave it. This, however, was not overlooked by Lessing, who has admitted the liberty thus taken by him with the facts of history.

NOTE 40. PAGE 155.

Who would dare to judge
The eternal laws of Heaven's majesty
By paltry canons of punctilio?

In this whole speech the Patriarch—although with characteristic astuteness he does not actually specify the point—animadverts bitterly on the recent rejection by the Templar of the base proposal which he, the Patriarch, had made to the knight through the agency of the lay-brother, as described in the fifth scene of the first act—the proposal, namely, that the Templar should not only abuse the liberty which, by the clemency of Saladin, he enjoyed at Jerusalem, by acting as a common spy in the interests of the crusaders, but that he should actually assassinate the Sultan, who had just generously spared his life. The scorn and indignant loathing of the Templar at the idea of a crime so detestable in itself and so additionally horrible by reason of its foul ingratitude, the Patriarch with execrable cynicism here characterises as a paltry and irritating punctilio.

NOTE 41. PAGE 156.

And I'd refer you to the theatre
Where points like this are argued *pro* and *con*.

Some commentators have found a difficulty in this allusion to the theatre, on the ground that points like that referred to in this passage cannot well be said to be discussed or argued *pro* and *con* on the stage. This, however, seems hypercritical, since such points might well be discussed or otherwise treated both in the drama and in other fiction. But if the force of the objection be admitted, the difficulty may be solved by assuming with Professor Buchheim that the word *theatre* in this passage should be taken as referring to the public halls of colleges and academies, which are used for purposes of discussion and demonstration, and which were, and still are, called *theatres*.

NOTE 42. PAGE 161.

I only hope we still
May meet the charges at the Sepulchre.

This expression is a reference to the historic fact that, after his occupation of Jerusalem, Saladin not only extended to all Christian pilgrims free access to the Holy Sepulchre, and abolished the "pilgrims' tribute" which had previously been exacted from them, but also made liberal contributions to such of them as were poor and needy, as the most of them were.

NOTE 43. PAGE 165.

The original word here translated as "the Moslem robe" is *Jamerlonk*. No such word, and no word at all resembling it, can be traced in Richardson's Arabic and Persian dictionary. Lessing has recorded that he understood it to mean the cloak or wide mantle used by the Arabs. Buchheim regards it as a Turkish word, and as a corruption of the Persian *Jaghmurlik*; but no word at all resembling this latter can be found in Richardson. There can be little doubt that, whatever its original source or form, it is a term which has undergone considerable corruption; but there is equally little doubt that it is intended to convey the idea of a robe or mantle.

NOTE 44. PAGE 165.

The hero who belike had liefer been
A delver in the garden of the Lord.

Here the Templar, pursuing the simile first used by Saladin, merely alludes to the natural gentleness and humanity of the Sultan, who, he implies, if he had been left to his natural bent, would probably have preferred peaceful and beneficent pursuits to the violent commotions of war.

NOTE 45. PAGE 166.

'Tis too much gain for any single day.

When Saladin refers to what has befallen him on that day as being too much gain for any single day, he alludes to the double acquisition of the Templar and of Nathan; and it is the thought of this latter which leads to the somewhat abrupt introduction of his name at this point.

NOTE 46. PAGE 173.

Save, indeed,
This very fear itself.

Saladin implies that he is reminded of his brother by the very fear which the Templar evinces lest his conduct may have caused him to forfeit the good opinion of the Sultan. That very fear, he conceives, would have been felt and betrayed by Assad under similar circumstances, and thus the Templar resembles him in this as well as in other respects.

NOTE 47. PAGE 181.

Not long ago I filled a hermit's cell
On Quarantana.

Quarantana, or Quarantania, is the name of the high and precipitous mountain lying between Jericho and Jerusalem,

where, according to local tradition, Christ is supposed to have passed his fast of forty days and forty nights, and to have undergone the temptation of Satan. Hence its name. In later times it was much resorted to by pilgrims and hermits.

NOTE 48. PAGE 183.

It was at Darún

I gave it to you.

Darún was a hamlet in the neighbourhood of Gath.

NOTE 49. PAGE 186.

The Christians had slaughtered every Jew
Who dwelt in Gath.

Strictly speaking, Gath had ceased to exist as a city at the time represented in this drama. The introduction of its name is a pure poetical licence.

NOTE 50. PAGE 196.

What can it be
That makes me now, so near my closing scene,
Suddenly wish to be an altered man?

The allusion here is to Saladin's new-formed resolution to endeavour to practise economy in his expenditure, previously referred to in the third scene of the fourth act.

NOTE 51. PAGE 199.

I'll ne'er again put foot within his doors.

It will be remembered that, towards the close of the fourth scene of the fourth act, Saladin had commanded the Templar to go to Nathan, and bring him to the Sultan's presence. His reluctance to enter Nathan's house is explained by what passed in the ninth scene of the third act, especially in its closing lines.

NOTE 52. PAGE 201.

And have I merited the scorn
With which I was dismissed by Saladin?

For the explanation of this expression see the latter part of the fourth scene of the fourth act, where Saladin had to reprove the vehemence of the Templar, besides reproaching him for having applied to the Patriarch before coming to the Sultan; and where, also, he questions the stability of his attachment to Recha.

NOTE 53. PAGE 211.

Nay, for that
Let him be thankful to the Patriarch
Who has more cause than I.

In this expression the Templar refers to the Evil One; implying that Satan is the one whom the Patriarch has ever most sedulously served.

NOTE 54. PAGE 213.

Our angel, be assured,
Will ever prove right worthy of our love.

Most translators have erroneously supposed that the German pronoun *er*, in the first of these lines, refers to Recha's new-found brother. In point of fact, it refers to the word *angel* used by the Templar two lines previously; that is to say, to Recha herself.

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